

Danielle Swain aka MsDz

Journal 2015 – 2016 – 2017

1/4/2015

"Either I am crazy or the world is crazy" my conclusion is: the world is crazy. There are only a few ways I can handle this news; I can be dejected downhearted miserable with sorrowful melancholy, I can have a sense of humor about it witty lighthearted tongue-in-cheek as they say. Or with some various degrees of both. Personally I prefer the 'sense of humor' with a little misery to make things slightly sardonic.

I talked with my sponsor last night. Again I procrastinated over the discussion of not going to as many meetings as required to maintain a sponsor sponsee relationship in her view. I did manage getting it out that the only reason I am going to as many meetings as I do is so I can maintain that relationship. I did get it out that I want her to consider letting me spend a month or two with only a couple of meetings; "just to test out how I am feeling about it" I did not let it out that the 'arrangement' over meetings is, within me, building a resentment with her and with meetings that is exacerbating the problem. Like when I was a child and 'mandatory' attendance to Sunday mass drove me mad in my pre-teen years. It also helped drive me to deception loss of faith rebelliousness and drug use. For sure that was not the only driver but it was part of the mix. Even though at times I feel like a pre-teen, I am not. I seek an adult way of handling this situation. And since this involves my sponsor seeking advice from my sponsor seems irrational but it may be the rational thing to do.

1/11/2015

Dear Cathy,

What an exciting week this has been, busy in a good way full of surprises. I tag this email with your last email to let you know, I think you might know already anyway, that my feelings of "being commanded" or 'pressured into doing' or 'told what to do' has nothing to do with you. Our sponsor sponsee relationship agreement was clear and straight. All those feelings are my own doing and reside in a long ago narrative of my life, popping up regularly. My task in regard to that is to deal with people places and things as they really are and I do have some experience and tools in accomplishing that task.

I have come around to thinking that all fellowships, tribes, families, communities, organizations, etcetera, have a similarity to religious organizations. That they all, at their core, have a belief or faith in a higher power; have principles and ideals; rules and precepts. Some groups are more stringent than others some more open-minded than others. I think for me and maybe for everyone that being a part of a group, a fellowship or something is core to survival and well-being. And at the same time, I think, that being independent, self-sufficient and self-reliant are also at the core to survival and well-being. A yang and yin kind of thing. Indeed the struggle between the two the churning and constant melding of the two are the source of my creative drive. Without independence I would be a drow without community I would be rudderless with no direction. This I believe is part of the human condition. My struggle coming to terms with the both may never end but I may find a peace between the two at times. For me, in all my searching and looking, NA is and has been my most valued fellowship, indeed it is my tribe. Thank you for being there for me.
Danielle

1/17/2015

Dear Cathy,

This has been a very busy week lots of work and lots of family here to celebrate my birthday, 65 .. woo-ho hooray a milestone they say more like just another birthday to me but we are having lots of fun. I have not had this much attention from my family and I am a little overwhelmed, there are some feelings of being out of place, isolating a little.

Next weekend we all (the family) go right into celebrating my grandchildren's first birthday. I am designated photographer. That is a good thing it gives me a strong sense of involvement. I had a poignant dream about Steven provoking more thought on life and death, spurring me on even more to live the life meant for me, rather the life I imagine is meant for me. There is an element of fear, I am charting new territory. I am not going to abandon all caution, those days are over. No purging no burning bridges or destroying relationships. I am seeing myself differently and chipping away at old precepts and perceptions of myself. Not sure where it is going to lead but I am going. As we say "more will be revealed".

Love you dearly, I know I am lax on contacting you, the days go by so fast. It seems in a moment the week passes. I am grabbing every second cherishing them with a vigor I have yet to comprehend.

Yours

Danielle

1/17/2015

Dear Fernando

I hope this email finds you well. I fear that my last email commenting on your work may have startled you or caused you some apprehensions. I see art and life in forms of narratives of my own invention. Sometimes they connect with other's story sometimes not. It is always a risk to share one's story. I will share one more. If you do not respond back I do understand and will not impose on you anymore.

1/17/2015 7am

Dear Susie

I recently finished a book of short stories by Margaret Atwood titled 'Stone Mattress' "...a fossilized cushion, formed by layer upon layer of blue-green algae building up into a mound or dome..."

I was deeply moved by this collection of stories, partly because of the quality of writing and partly because of the age bracket they fit into (my age and older). Stories about older people living life. Not just simple narratives rather in-depth and poignant stories with twists and turns sometimes in strange directions and right down my ally. Part of me wanted to burn everything I have written and start over again. The level of quality is something I do not think I will every reach but try to aspire to, that I can do. It is the best work I have read by a contemporary writher. I am blown away and look forward to reading more of her work.

All is well around here the grand babies are here Matt Hannah Kathleen all here. A little overwhelming but tolerable. I am holding my own, I do have a sense of something hard to explain, more than just a discomfort or feeling of not being part of, I cannot put words to it at this time.

I do hope you are well that life is treating you with dignity and grace. I am looking forward to next weekend and you coming up to the kids one year birthday. I will talk to you soon.

Much love

Danielle

01/19/2015

The late night moves in a dream, not the old dream, this is new. Golden bright light on gauze of air that lingers in the trees with shadowy arms stretching across a shimmering landscape. Those days of old Mystical lands are long ago lost and gone. A new fairytale comes as the late gold night moves bright into vision bringing new apprehension that the old no longer brings.

Heart flutters as a new soft voice carries along down the forest's path of magical sensations again.

1/20/2015

Dear Susie

A short response to our talk of yesterday:

Lists. When it comes to lists there are a few. Here is the List of lists.

List of household chores (very big)

List of eBay work

List of stuff to do the get stuff for eBay

List of photo work, (this one has sub categories)

Photos I want or plan to shoot

Photos I have shot and need work

Classes/tutorials to finish/start/look for

List of what to do with finished work

List of gear I want, don't want or don't need

List of how I am going to change the world

List of how I am going to put more meaning in my life

List of things to do to stay healthy

List of things I want to do for Matthew Hannah and grand-babies

List of stuff relating to recovery and my fellowship

List of things to do to stay calm serene and tranquil while doing all the things on my lists

List of what to do to prepare for my death (this includes much of the above)

Okay, that is a start. These lists are rather clear and precise. They reside in my head well organized and readily accessed. They move back and forth on the metaphorical mental stove from front burner to back burner. Sometimes things heat up boil over and cause me to lose valuable and necessary sleep.

As you have recommended writing them down will give some more clarity to it all, just as writing down this list of lists has done already. Thank you for being in my life.

Sincerely

Danielle

P.S. there is one other list: List of things to do for Susie.

1/23/2015

Dear Janice

Thank you for forwarding the National Resource Center on LGBT Aging website, very informative and I signed up for their email newsletter. I do think I am going to pass on the 'photo contest' for now. I talked to my family and some of the requirements (full written releases from all people in the photo) and the use of the photo in any venue so desired by the staff, goes beyond their and my desires. I read over some of the articles and do see the need for greater understanding in 'aging' and being LGBorT. Maybe I can find some way to participate because I think I have some important insight in that regard. Whether or not that insight gets out there or not time will tell. As far as the 'T' part of LGBT I have always had some apprehension about that. A trans person can be gay bi lesbian or straight. Also the word transsexual has an indication in its wording and meaning that something is transitioning from one thing to another. In my view being trans is not a permanent state of being. And in my view one of the biggest problems in the 'trans community' is that many get stuck in it, never finding their way through it and to a completed existence. Needless to say this may be an experience for many people in the world for I think much of all life consistencies of many transitions and getting stuck in them seems to be a common occurrence. My experience, especially with transgender people, if people are stuck they often are not open to ideas as to how to get unstuck, they would rather find ways to accept the often inevitable reality that being stuck is all they got. Truth be known, for transgender people, sometimes going forward there is no going back and once in the thick of it going forward to the end is so daunting just sitting down and stopping is the most reasonable solution. I knew what I was getting into from the start. I had the will and the fortitude for it also some strong sense of self. I do not think of myself as transgender at all. I was for a time but not now. I am just me.

Your loving friend

01/28/2015

My name is Danielle and I am an artist.

This site is to develop and host my body of work
I set up this space to develop and host my body of work.
This space here is to develop and host my body of work.

"Here is a quick way which will help an artist to develop their body of artwork. What is the one thing that you love to photograph film or write about? What is the subject matter that

fascinates you? What media do you favor more than anything else? What style of art excites and captivates your imagination? The answers to these questions will help direct your focus for all of your future creations and thus, you will begin to develop your own personal body of work."

- 1) What is the one thing that you love to photograph film or write about?
 - 2) What is the subject matter that fascinates you?
 - 3) What media do you favor more than anything else?
 - 4) What style of art excites and captivates your imagination?
- Okeydokey!

01/30/2015

Dear Cathy

I did not get a chance to call you last night, I was busy and when time became free it was late in the evening. I was on the phone with Jim Saber, Steven's cousin, last night discussing the final preparations with Steven's affairs and my part in it. I will meet up with him today and pick up the final personal items that I will ship to those relatives that have requested them. That will be the last of my participation in this project and I look forward to being done with it. Well, as best as I can be 'done with it'. I am the designated guardian of Steven's photographs, all that on other family members don't want. All that is set aside and stored away and after I finish with Jim I can take a long breather from the 'passing of Steven K'.

Dear Cathy

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I have worked a weekly 'to do list' into my life. I have tried a daily 'to do list' with no success, I will see how the weekly list goes over the next few months.

That is it for now sweetheart talk to you soon.

Love

Danielle

P.S. I hope all is well with you and life is treating you fairly.

02/4/2015

The destitution of modern man

Billions of us stuffed in large jardinières, as Samuel Beckett would have us, simultaneously self-centered on meaningless dribble about our lot in life and what to do about it. Forever trying to solve a riddle of some kind of Gordian knot that is impossible to unravel mainly because there is nothing free in us to do the unraveling.

"Where is my Nobel prize my Oscar my fame and prestige? Why am I left uninvited? I work I struggle I do my duty yet there is little more than toil to show for it. For sure if I was invited elected or awarded I would be indigent, yes I would fake modesty humility and such. Those that would have me don't deserve me yet I want to be have."

02/08/2015

Yesterday, for the umpteenth time, I watched 'Casablanca'.

2/11/2015

The other day I watched 'Casablanca'. It is one of my favorite movies. The scene when the young beleaguered newlywed questions Rick if Captain Renault is an honorable man "Will he do what he says Mr. Rick" she goes on to explain how they must get to America and Captain Renault has promised letters of transit if she just. She asks Rick "you are a man" could she ever be forgiven by her husband if he ever found out what she did to get them to America. The pleading on her face, this is where I start crying, the anguish and determination. And Rick saying "yes yes Captain Renault will keep his word." Then, with a disturbing look of guilt and hesitant remorse, he insists she go back home, not go to America that she would be better off in where ever it

was she came from in war torn Europe. In her eyes there is a look of gentle defiance "if you only knew what it was like back there..". Rick dismissive and disturbed gets up, I crying harder now knowing what is coming next, moves over to the bar then into the casino room and to the roulette table. The husband of the desperate newlywed is sitting at the table with the last of his few chips, the chips he was using to raise the money to get to America. Destitute bewildered he begins to rise with the last three chips and accept his disastrous loss. Rick puts a hand on his shoulder and says put them on twenty two. With one look at the croupier Rick indicates his instructions. The young man wins. "Leave them there" and he wins again.

If you have not seen this movie it is a must see. This scene is the turning point for our hero Rick. Not since Paris has Rick done a truly kind act. Not since Paris has his heart been moved. Yes always a kind man an honorable man. But here he turns to compassion against his own 'better judgment', an act total lacking in self-interest. It is his defining moment. The scene is short and quickly passed, yet it turns Rick and the movie to their final outcome.

2/13/2015

Dear Fernando,

I received your email about the Palm Springs exhibition and I wish the very best for you and much success. I also saw that you have an Etsy site, very nice very professional.

I am working on my first 'collection' of photographs. It will consist of 20 to 30 pieces framed and ready for exhibition. Though finding a gallery to exhibit a 'first time-er' is a task all its own I thought it best to have the pieces ready beforehand.. I am also constructing a website for hosting my work. All this is taking time and money. Hence I can't quit the antique business but I am structuring it around my main interest and it seems to be working just fine bringing me a steady income.

Looking at the work of established and professional contemporary art photographers, I find my lack of a history of a background or 'pedigree' that most all I admire have, leaves me troubled that my efforts will amount to little more than a hobby. I resist the temptation to dwell on this and focus on my work. Still I am driven to look at the work of others to see what others are doing. Somehow this 'looking' aids in homing in on my own style and skills.

Best to you

Sincerely

Danielle

2/17/15

Truth be told.

More times than not I do not feel 'part of'. More often than not I feel like an outsider looking in, the proverbial loner looking into the party from the outside. That being said there are occasions where I do feel part of and feel like I belong. As I reflect on my life my personality and my temperament those moments of feeling 'part of' are more than I would expect. Though there are more times I feel left out, there are numerous times I feel a sense of belonging.

Over the years I have come to understand that my experience of feeling 'left out' not 'part of' is a common experience and possibly part of the human condition. It is those moments of feeling part of something the feeling of belonging that need to be cultivated cherished and taken to the heart. They are the sweet fruit of life.

March 11, 2015

"You Can't imagine how much I fell like making love to you. But I'll never tell anyone, especially not you. They'd have to torture me to make me say that I want to make love to you. Not just once. Over and over again! But I'll never tell you that. I'd have to be crazy to tell you I'd even make love to you now right here, for the rest of my life."

Life is Beautiful

In the midst of ordinary simple life it is still beautiful.

When life takes it's darkest turns love is still within me. Quick like lightning I sing out "I dreamt about you all night long" even in this bleak place.

Life is Beautiful

When dark is at its blackest it turns darker still my voice sings out a lost melody twisting through the cruelty of the night.

Life is Beautiful.

3/13/2015

Final draft:

In the midst of ordinary simple life it is still beautiful.

When life takes it's darkest turns love is still within me.
Quick like lightning I dreamt all night long even in this bleak
place.

Life is Beautiful

When dark is at its blackest it turns darker still my voice
sings out a lost melody twisting through the cruelty of the
night.

Life is Beautiful.

3/23/2015

Just so wasted.

6am and I am watching a movie 'Gus Van Saint's Last Days' a film
about a drugged out Seattle Rock star starring Michael Pitt. I
can guess the outcome of the movie by the title. This is not any
great movie, the interesting aspect is that everyone in this
stoned out junkies life, in the frame and time line of the film,
treats him like as if he was not a junkie. Something so obvious
goes right over everybody's head on the face of things. I think
it is because everyone else has their own agenda and even though
this 'Rock Star' is at the center of all the other characters'
lives, their livelihood their careers his eminent death is of
little concern for them. So I wonder, who really are the fucked
up junked up players in this movie? The addict himself or all
the dickish people in his life? O yah the movie is an obvious
take-off of Kurt Cobain

3/23/15

In the scheme of things I want to just sit back and enjoy the
rest of my life. I do not mean 'do nothing' rather I mean take
it a little easier, less concern about success more focus on
productivity and learning in a personal level.

3/24/15

The Social War Begins

Ted Cruse has placed his hat in the Presidential race. Anti-
government; with desires to end Social Security the IRS
government supported healthcare, and other social supports. Pro-
Life, anti-gay, racially divisive, economically politically
socially and religiously an extreme conservative.

"We are a democracy, which is to say we are a republic of opinion. We operate according to the opinion of our citizens. That being the case one of the primary services that need to be performed in such a society is to attend to the quality of American opinion, to the means of American opinion formation. The more enlightened and sophisticated and historically informed and critically minded American opinion will be the better our country will be. The more manipulatable the more shorter attention span the more distracted the more disengaged from serious argument American opinion will be the less good our country is going to be."

Leon Wieseltier

4/3/2015

"Yesterday I announced that I was going to commit public suicide, admittedly an act of madness. Well, I'll tell you what happened: I just ran out of bullshit. I really don't know any other way to say it other than I just ran out of bullshit. Bullshit is all the reasons we give for living. And if we can't think up any reasons of our own, we always have the God bullshit. We don't know why we're going through all this pointless pain, humiliation, decay, so there better be someone somewhere who does know. That's the God bullshit. And then, there's the noble man bullshit; that man is a noble creature that can order his own world;... Well, if there's anybody out there that can look around this demented slaughterhouse of a world we live in and tell me that man is a noble creature, believe me: That man is full of bullshit."

Howard Beale

4/11/2015

I find myself seeking relevance in a world where relevance is measured by the amount of power influence wealth fame drive and talent one has. In this world the bar is set high and I am well below the bar, hence I am left with a nagging feeling of being irrelevant. In some sense there is no relevance, it is an illusion. Yet this illusion stands so firm in my world that it takes on the air of reality. A reality that from birth to death most all of its inhabitants are influenced by it if not driven by it. Some step off the 'merry-go-round' but few free themselves from the illusion without going numb or insane fewer still live

a self-driven life within their talents with no concerns of others opinions, leaving power and influence behind them. Even Howard Roark from the famed story 'The Fountainhead' could not accomplish that task. The character that came closest was Murray Burns from 'A Thousand Clowns' yet he too, in order not to live a loveless lonely life, returned to a conventional existence. The story ends happily with Murray hopping back on the 'merry-go-round' accountable to his ward and nephew Nick, and his sweetheart Sandra. I wonder how the story would play out after Nick has grown and left home after he grew old.

I am in the twilight of my life now, twittering into sunset. I have spent much of that life chasing my illusions. My child is grown my loves long gone. Power influence fame never in my grasp is now even farther from my reach. I have some insignificant wealth some talent some drive. I am ready to step off and wander my own path. Can I let my illusions go? Some yes maybe more. Time will tell.

4/23/2015

I find no comfort in the well-established belief in a god. Everything or most everything I believe, much of that comes from some kind of story. Very little of my beliefs that I am concise of come from any of my own experiences. Most all of my concise beliefs opinions and concepts come from the books I have read or the movies I have seen, with some from teachers and lessons from schooling, little of my own.

I find no comfort in the universal belief and faith in God. Evidence to the contrary stands out like the proverbial 'elephant in the room' invisible to most due to the absurdity of something real that large in our room of make believe.

4/13/2015

A prayer from me to you

"May the poor find wealth, those with sorrow find joy. May the forlorn find new hope constant happiness and prosperity. May the frightened cease to be afraid and those bound be free. May the weak find power and may our hearts join in friendship." The Dalai Lama

4/14/2015

The body to its end seeks fulfillment. In its power prowess and energy strives to continually grow. In time all things fade and the body diminishes, yet it still clings to those features of

youth. Constantly dreaming of rejuvenation the body clings to life, long after the spirit has departed, with some kind of cellular hope of rebirth.

5/14/2015

Traveling in solitude

Much of the sights in Charleston are packed with an overabundance of travelers of all ages and dressed in every imaginable style including no style what so ever. Drove of people filling this beach or that wandering historical botanical plantations and gardens. Bus tours, restraint tastings, mass excursions of oversized busses cruising back alley streets drifting onto sidewalks as they sluggishly turn around and around again navigating there load of casual tourists here and there.

As these Bermuda-short floral-shirt wearing bodies depart there ships on wheels mindlessly snapping there phone cameras, their faces look as stunned as the dead snapper or halibut they had or will have at that second rate restaurant decorated, as highly paid and highly educated marketing advisers advised, with faked distressed beams, phony life preservers from ancient ships that never existed, Styrofoam swordfish hanging on the walls and made up photos of the men that caught that plastic replicas of something that was once alive. All this stuff neatly wrapped up and linked together with ship's mooring rope.

And there you have it. The present day version of the "Grand Tour"

As a solitary traveler I am up well before sunrise visiting this or that spot at the crack of dawn. The beaches are empty the streets are easily passable and only locals or seasoned travelers are out and about. If the gardens open at eight thirty I am there when the staff shows up and with some kindness and sweet talk I often gain admittance with them. As soon as the first two or three gigantic busses arrive I depart.

5/13/15

My father was veteran of world war two. A war that set a new social paradigm. The century before and the early part of the twentieth century was one of modest decorum of moral structure based in scripture and patriarchal order. Most of life fit into a pattern of self-denial disciplined behavior regulated emotions

and obedience to principles long set by historical beliefs in piety prudence and submission. Values that stood as benchmarks of social acceptance social stability and order. World war one put a crack in this order, world war two shattered it.

5/17/15

Letter to Rihanna

Bitch what the hell you doing?

Are you hi on crack?

Are you hi on crack?

Bitch what the hell you doing?

Don't you know you must know it?

Bitch what the hell you doing?

Beat down all we are

Playing that you don it

Being gangster on a lark

Just be taken all our money

Who you think you fucking on?

Rap rap rap

We be 13 it's all about you baby and we just bought your rap

Don't you see everything we want ain't about your rap?

Cra-a-a-ap

Our life in the back seat, you're not playing your part.

Don't act like you forgot.

5/18/15

Within those things that make up the 'human condition' there is a consistent ongoing conflict. This conflict, for most of mankind's existence, has been contemplated and written about

meditated on the subject of art literature and music the source of war and the cause of sleepless nights for many philosophers. Often dubbed the conflict between good and evil mind and body heart and soul self-will and God's-will Stoic and Romantic along with a countless number of other synonyms. How does the common simple being come to terms with this drama when all the great thinkers those of great power and capital all fall short? Or is it that some do transcend the play? There are stories of some who break free, but little empirical evidence of it. All the biographies I have read, biographies great and small, all end with 'The Conflict' never ending. Most of literary fiction I have read is the same.

The early part of this year I have been reflecting on 'The Conflict' within me. My answer my solution is to move through it with grace. Grace that I cannot manifest or create on my own. Grace that comes on with no will of mine. A letting of time and space move it within me and yes move it out of me. So I fall again. I rise and move on. This is my path. A path of never knowing, quieting my expectation and waiting, when grace will come again.

It was a great pleasure wrapping up the 6th step with you. It is always a pleasure getting with you for whatever the reason, but finishing up the 6th step was especially good. Okay we ended with more work ahead, not unexpected and not necessarily causing my any joy. In some ways I am much like Maynard G. Krebs the beatnick sidekick in the 1959 television sitcom: 'The Many Loves of Dobie Gillis'. Whenever the word "work" is mentioned, even in passing, he yelps out "WORK?!" and jumps with fear or even faints. At the age of nine I spiritually I identified with Maynard and physically identified with Dobie's girlfriend Yvette LeBlanc.

Intellectual I challenge the concept of "work is the path to success" I challenge the notion that step work lads to the spiritual solution of my defects and shortcomings. But what the heck do I know? It has worked in ways I do not understand either by design or serendipitously. I have bridled up my cart to the fellowship of NA committed to working the steps with a sponsor I admire and cherish. So what if I yelp at the thought of more work and I go all "deer in Headlights". It passes and I move on. I am always amazed at what is accomplished. Thank you for being there for me. It means a great deal to me.

Sincerely and with all my love

Danielle

5/27/2015

Dear Cathy

I am not sure of your exact clean date but I do know you are celebrating, I am so excited, tomorrow. Ever since I showed up in NA you have been there. Often humorous and charming sometimes aggravated and annoyed. But always with a strong sense of injustice, humility and a large measure of kindness. From the very beginning I wanted to get to know to find out more about you. As with anything worth knowing it takes time. Over the years I have come to count you as a dear friend and to cherish that. I am also very fortunate to have you as a sponsor a mentor. Your friendship is a gift to my life an asset. Your sponsorship has changed my life, has helped me find my way through life and has challenged me to a greater understanding of myself and the world around.

Thank you for being, congrats on your hard won clean time

Your loving friend and sponsee

Danielle

6/3/2015

On Kaitlyn Jenner

Ms. Jenner's Vanity Fair cover shot came out yesterday, very nice glam shot by the way, and the media went all a flutter over her new look. Used to be Jenner was judged by athletic ability, character and performance past and present. Welcome to womanhood Kaitlyn. Seems now all the media is judging you by your fuck-ability commenting on how old you are and how soon you will lose that fuck-ability or whether that fuck-ability was photoshopped or airbrushed in. Comparing your fuck-ability to other women's fuck-ability. Welcome to the world of women Kaitlyn where you are mostly judged by your looks not your accomplishments. Where you are, for the most part, marginalized to being fuckable or not. Where when you grow old you become invisible more often than not because you are no longer fuckable. A world where you are strongly encouraged to glam up, to corset up, to make up, and slim down in order to be fucked.

6/10/2015

Most stories I hear or see do not strike a chord in me. My character my being is so often left out of the common tale. The romances do not match my nature the fables do not tell my drama. But on occasion a play comes close to my mark my narrative. Even though not dead on I can later dream the story of me, that sweet romance coming true, where life is fulfilled and when awake there is again the lingering satisfaction with my existence my story.

6/21/2015 Father's day

To think that on this day in this world this twenty first century over so many years my son still lives in shame over his transgender biological father. Not a word, email, text or call, nothing. There is no day for me. Mother's day is for his mom. I am given the secret message "this is your doing, my shame is your fault." Courage is not something a parent can give their child. A child must find it on their own. Nor can I give wisdom compassion or understanding. To be a part of a family that ask me to keep hidden in the shadows of some distant relative called something other than parent, part of a family that lives in fear of "what to tell the children", All this tries my substantial patience. I will bite my tongue and keep my sadness over this to myself. But I do not think I can be the affable silent parent any more. To know my son is ashamed of me to think he may even hate me for who I am, a secret he may not even admit to himself, that pains me beyond words.

Dear Hanna and Matthew I have tried calling you both but have been unable to reach you. I hope this note successfully reaches you Hanna please pass it on to Matthew.

Father's Day has become a yearly oddity for me. Every year it is a reminder of my transition and how big a difference this makes in family relations. It also shows how our culture struggles with anything or anyone who steps far outside gender norms. Our language does not know what to do with a transgender parent. There is always a touch of sadness for me this time of year. Let Matt know I am so very proud of him that I love him you and the babies so much it makes my heart swell.

6/23/2015

"It is not enough for a wise man to study nature and truth; he should dare state truth for the benefit of the few who are willing and able to think. As for the rest, who are voluntarily

slaves of prejudice, they can no more attain truth, than frogs can fly."

Julien Offray de La Mettrie. *Man a Machine*

5/23/2015

The corner-stone of the Southern Confederacy

"The Confederate government is based on the great truth that the negro is not equal to the white man." March 21 1865

Alexander H. Stevens Vice President of the Confederate States of America

The Confederate flag has always been a symbol of intimidation and terror and that is what it is today, a symbol of hat.

6/24/2015

A black man's words to the southern good ol' boys

"You are some funny funny people. For you it is always summer time, the living is easy your daddy is rich and your mama is good looking. You're a confederate. A proud southern white boy your bible in your hand and your shotgun in your pickup truck. A southern white boy with the shame of slavery running through your veins. You are a bigot. I am a black man. I have worked and scraped for every inch of dirt I walk on. You cried yourself to sleep because Lincoln hurt your feelings. You backwoods sheet wearing cross burning honky mother fucker. You lose the war and all you want to do is make my people pay for it. You think you love this country, what you love is that corruption of the red white and blue you call valor. What you love is the satisfaction that mess brings when people feel they need to give that flag some credence like it stands for something more than hate. Fighting about whether to tear it down from atop of your state building or not. You are a bigot and I am disappointed in the way you treat my country." Papa Pope

7/1/2015

"My grandma on my mother's side... she had these two dogs, pure bloodhounds... both came up the same litter. She kept them and gave the rest away to the neighbors. Both known each other since they had shit in their eyes. Neither one ever treated any better than the other one. Gentlest dogs you'd ever care to meet. So anyway... Thanksgiving of my ninth year, these two old dogs are trailing me around... 'cause they know the score... I'm a animal

lover who never finishes his supper. So right before I get up from the table... I toss these two old-timers a turkey leg... attached to a hunk of cartilage. And it was like they'd never met. They went at each other so ferociously... all tooth and claw and jugular... They forgot anything they ever had in common... and scrapped like that discard decided between their standing and dying. People just do the strangest things when they believe they're entitled. But they do even stranger things when they just plain believe."

FBI Agent Keenan

7/6/2015 Journal entry

From the middle of Spring till now, the beginning of Summer, my life has been a whirlwind of activity. Most of that activity has been repairing storm damage around the house, hosting for my grandchildren my son and his wife. Along with managing to keep eBay going, taking a road trip, lots of photographs and getting some step-work done.

I still find time to be compulsive about my eating my weight, the gaining the losing. I always make time to dwell on my feelings of 'not being part of' 'not belonging'. The latter being with me ever since I can remember, I wonder if it will ever go away. Acting as if I am 'part of' is counter intuitive and awkward but I use that as my go to remedy none the less and it is a struggle, it is draining to keep up the pretense of 'belonging'. As to the former issue, that seems to be a struggle of will power of controlling my momentary desires and instant gratification. This too is exhausting and draining on my spirit. Through all this I remain vigilant, steadfast. I move forward as best I can and when I step back I do my best to minimize the guilt without completely dismissing the struggle. I read a lot of the stories of great and infamous men and women throughout history, it gives me hope strength and solace.

Self-examination is constant theme throughout my life. Staying connected to the living, the human race is a necessity and I found my way to that through my fellowship. Narcotics Anonymous has afforded me so many opportunities in all aspects of my life.

First helping me lift the veil of self-deception that I placed over my life experiences than offering me freedom to explore myself and the world with some clarity. And foremost, despite all my historical knowing that I do not belong in this world, NA brought me to people that care about my well-being and I care about theirs. From there I have been able to live life like have never lived it before, full of adventure, fulfillment, love and happiness. Yes there is all that other stuff still the feelings of not belonging the struggles with willpower but I stand in the light of day no longer in the dark.

"To create beauty, not out of love or liberty but solitude forever you must live and die in a dungeon."

Mademoiselle Blanche Monnier

I refuse to live and die in the dungeon of my own creation. Rather I will create a realm out of love and liberty. And from this vantage point, eyes wide open, I will not overlook the disenfranchised, the forlorn and lonely, the corruption and cruelty around me, and maybe in some small way I will be part of what changes the world.

7/12/15

Photography, more than a hobby, it is my avocation.

God.

The first Philosophy: Theology

Aristotle

So much of the divine as it appears to us.

Since claims of religion either transcend the level of experience or include possibilities that are not given directly in experience, there acceptance requires something called faith.

Faith has much in common with ordinary belief.

The warrants of belief:

Thomas Reid, requirements of belief: The principle of voracity and the principle of credulity. "even the greatest liars speak a hundred truths for every deception."

William James: Will to believe. "The primitive impulse to affirm immediately the reality of all that is conceived.

Alexander Bane "The leading factor in belief is our primitive credulity"

Primitive credulity over time is diminished. Diminished in strength by experience and the greater independence of mind. Credulity gives way to caution and critical appraisals some sort of standard is developed less the filtering and judging be arbitrary and counterproductive.

What distinguishes a preferred belief from an ordinary fantasy?

Life on the whole our interest and aims

William James "The pragmatist turns his back resolutely and once and for all from abstraction and insufficiency from verbal solutions from bad a priori reasons from fixed principles closed systems and pretended absolute origins. He turns towards concreteness and adequacy towards facts towards action and towards power"

Our most compelling interests

Leap of faith

A disciplined between infantile credulity and paralyzing skepticism. The instrument? A pragmatic one broadly conceived.

What of our most compelling interests?

Some reasonable understanding of our nature.

Some reasonable understanding of the nature of the world we find ourselves in, its rules or laws governing its operations.

Some understanding of the point of life itself with others. If it is the case surely it would matter to know if the world is constituted in such a way so that we could be able to afford decent and productive lives. It would matter to know if it is the case that the laws of physical nature are reliable that the reality is rendered in such a way that it is possible to be knowable and supportive of our form of life. It matters, just in case, that the providential God of the world's major religions is behind the reality we find ourselves. And the reality of that God is surely not under challenge just in case the closest we can get to it is by way of inferences and beliefs including those inferences to the best explanation.

Put another way: Inference to the best criterion

What is the best explanation for the very lawfulness of the cosmos itself? The best explanation for the anomic character of reality? Why is there a lawful rather than a lawless reality?

Is it indefinite probability? Is it just luck? Sometimes order happens sometimes not? we may find evidence of some failed reality at some point but we have not as of yet. Even with that this does not defeat the theory of a providential God. At best probability or just luck leads to some degree of trial and error as an aspect of the creation. So what is the best explanation? What matches up with our experience with highly ruled complex systems toasters computers voting machines or automobiles for example. In all such instances the best explanation is in terms of design and designers. The realization of actual plans and purposes. Hence we have a more defensible warrant in believing that the designed features of reality do indeed suggest a designer.

Saint Thomas Aquinas: Five ways to prove the existence of God
abridged

- 1) Now Whatever is in motion is put in motion by another. That thing that first put something in motion we call God.
- 2) In the world of sense we find there is an order of efficient cause. That which created the order we call god.
- 3) We find in nature things that are possible to be and not to be. That which created the possible we call God.
- 4) Among beings there are some more and some less good. That which causes the more and the less we call God.
- 5) We see that things which lack intelligence, such as natural bodies, act for an end, and this is evident from their acting always, or nearly always, in the same way, so as to obtain the best result. Therefore some intelligent being exists by whom all natural things are directed to their end; and this being we call God

The "Good Life"

A contemplative life an active life with a fatalistic element. Living the good life may be living a life that you don't directly know is the good life. Maybe it is living a life as a certain kind of being a certain kind of person whether you are practically happy with it or not. The good life may not be the personally happy life. Living a good life may not be about living self-consciously. The good life may be living in a way that is conscious of others their needs and desires their

deserts. The good life may turn out to be a life of service and sacrifice.

All men dream, but not equally. Those who dream by night in the dusty recesses of their minds, wake in the day to find that it was vanity: but the dreamers of the day are dangerous men, for they may act on their dreams with open eyes, to make them possible.

T. E. Lawrence

"Tip the country on its side and everything that falls loose lands in LA"

Ezra Goodman

7/13/2015

A scientist once asked the Dalai Lama: What would you do if something scientific disproved your religious beliefs? After much thought he said "I would look at all the papers. I would take a look at all the research and really try and understand things and in the end if it was clear that the scientific evidence disproved my spiritual belief I would change my belief. What would you do if something spiritual disproved your scientific belief."

7/23/2015

The rich and not so powerful. Above midlevel corporate executives on the top floor below the penthouse floor, the minions looking down below seeing all the ants that seemingly serve them, that they fantasize about crushing them even deeper below them before they themselves get crushed. The minions, those highly functional sociopaths that do the bidding for the truly powerful, sit in wait for their call and as they wait they fuck each other's wives and husbands or just simply fuck each other over and over again and again like in a dance that is a game to see who can win a worthless prize. Time spent between crushing ants below, fucking each other and the occasional command from above, is filled by their wine their antiques golf

or another high end mundane activity. They fear dogs and horses hence they avoid equestrian or canine activity. They are the heart of the cooperate world. They keep all the parts liquefied with a black soulless juice. In the end they are nothing and tossed out with the trash all used up, their hopes and dreams of "reaching the top" crushed and ground in the machine they longed to be part of.

8/20/2015

"Every fast-food joint around every corner delivers diabetes to millions of people. Philip Morris hands out lung cancer on the hour every hour. Everyone is destroying the planet beyond the point of no return. Are you really going to start taking all of these things personal?" Mr. Robot

9/8/2015 10pm something old from long ago comes back to me in a rush of wind and furry. Some piece of perfection in sound and song long lost in my history. It reminds me of my own long lost perfection in living life and I cry out in shame sorrow and joy too for I am alive again feeling this rush of wind moving me down a strange miraculous existence beckoning me "Let your failed dream go the next one will be infinitely better".

9/12/2015

From a year ago:

Here I am at the Scott's antique market, doing well, not having much fun but some. I am making the best of it. I am able to observe my temperament throughout the day. That gives me some perspective. I would hate to live my life having to do antique shows. Even though there is some necessity to do them I can keep it down to twice or three times a year. So far I have sold what I wanted to sell and everything else is gravy. If only I could leave now I would be thrilled but with all the stuff I have all the work I have done to get here it would be foolish to leave. I have an 'Amazon book on tape', they don't use tape anymore it is just downloaded to my I phone. "Great Expectations" I loved the movie hated reading it love listening to it. I Charles Dickens day much of his work was intended to be read to others, since many did not read.

So this is how I spend my time; listening to Dickens; contemplating my navel; contemplating others navel AKA people

watching; (by the way the general public is just as strange as most addicts) and dealing with the occasional customer.
Love you very much

9/27/2015

From this delightful perspective I look long to a time before the shattered actuality of a child's life with a drunken mother's misery that fractured everything in its wake. A time before with alive loving eyes a playful voice and soft caresses. That too was delightful...

I carry with me, always, a sorrow and loss that acts as my keel. It is the basic foundation of my structure a major source of my strength.

9/28/2015

For just one day we can be heroes. How wonderful life is now that you're in the world.

The greatest thing you will ever learn is to love and be loved.

9/30/2015

Notes on Step 8

We made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.

"Every time you step on an ant you affect the balance of nature." Some scientist somewhere.

In some respect every lie I told, every promise I broke, every action I took that was self-serving has caused someone harm. In my long life of addiction there is hardly anyone I have not in some way, small or large, harmed. My list seems endless.

To Start:

My mother father sister myself. Aunt Margaret Uncle George Uncle Ray Aunt Marie. My cousins Ron Tom Sara Cathy Marc Collette Joanne. Nephews Keven and Mark. Childhood friends Dan Jim Tim Stephaney. A myriad of high school friends, acquaintances and using buddies with names I cannot recall. As a young adult;

numerous one night stands, weekend flings and short live affairs, again names I do not remember. Longer term relations; Stephany Kelly Marie Sydney Teri. Bob Z my therapist not telling him the truth of my drug usage, that harmed me more than him. A failed marriage with Kathleen. My son Matthew. Around ten drug dealers I ripped off. Later in life before I got clean; Julian Diane Janice. Three or four Landlords I skipped out on paying rent, can't remember their names. A few nameless unknown people I stole from. Okay now I am clean the 'harm' level goes way down. Still; myself, self-deceit self-grandiosity self-devaluing. Still people pleasing procrastinating and lying about it with my sponsors Ginny and Cathy. With my NA friends and network; not always being direct, being secretive, not forthcoming with my truth again people pleasing. Year by year it is getting better and better. Did I leave anyone out? There is the countless number of people I ditzed overlooked diminished neglected had road rage with cursed. There was the Dinner family that gave me a job a potential career knowing full well my problems. They took me in treated me like family and I chose dope over that. There are the friends I had in group therapy long ago and again I chose dope over friendship. People in business I scammed or cheated again names I cannot remember.

In the basic text; "...to make a list of all persons we have had harmed to clear away the fear and guilt that our past holds for us... Our experience tells us that we must become willing before this step will have any effect".

This is my second go around on this step. The list is pretty much the same. Some of the people I have made amends with formal and informal complete and partial.

10/3/2015

Usually we feel guilty and frightened because there is something wrong with us and we don't know what it is.

In active addiction the only time we surrender is when there are drugs around.

When I first got clean I was a whimpering dog inside nothing more than that.

People, counselors, Narcotics Anonymous members and such seem to think a job is a happy thing.

Hidden away from the world are human paralysis dementia impossible deformities insanity and other disorders of the structure that makes God look like a senseless maniac. You and I do not know about these diseases until we get them in witch case we will also be put out of sight.

When we are completely and openly a mess there is no more pretending. Meanwhile the rust of us go around trying to fool each other.

"The place between our lives on this earth we go back to mingle with other souls waiting to be born. All these weirdos and me getting a little better every day right in the middle of them. I had never known I never even imagined for a heartbeat that there might be a place for people like us."

10/3/2015

Hidden away from the world are human paralysis dementia impossible deformities insanity and other disorders of the structure that makes God look like a senseless maniac. You and I do not know about these diseases until we get them in witch case we will also be put out of sight.

10/05/2015

Dear Susie

Something that has been on my mind for some time now. No words to put on it no real understanding till just recently still not fully formed or reaching any conclusion.

There is a fear in us, maybe everyone maybe just a few or somewhere in between, that something is wrong with us and we do not know what it is. That something within us will destroy us and all that are around us. Like a grenade throwing shrapnel all about ripping flesh and bone. We hide we isolate from others and ourselves. Hence 'Only Friends' we text or email to the advances of others offering love. Never engaging past that line, never finding true passion intimacy or companionship. Because that fear of destroying anything we care about that power we think we have, the illusion overpowers us.

10/7/2015

Harry Kari's Bar and Grill is open 5 am today due to the Cub's game today, pre-game activity and such. So here I am, up early, looking for a good cup of coffee and outside my room window I

see all the excitement at Harry's. They gota have a good cup of java. I get dressed ride the elevator to the lobby cross the street push through all the reporters and the sports fans to the bar. The bar tender she asks me "wadel you have?" I ask "how is the coffee?" She says "I do not know." I get a puzzled look on my face possibly judgmental to here... Like "hay lady you work here and you don't know how the drinks are?" Mind you I did not say that. With some serious attitude she takes finger traces an invisible circle around her face and says "all this is all natural" I burst out laughing, say "okay" and walk out coffee less.

Now I understand about eating natural and healthy living a naturalistic life as best one can, but living in a big and busy city like Chicago, working as a bartender, I am not sure how anyone can be all that "natural". The air alone is rather unnatural the surroundings are surreal.

Love you very very much

10/7/2015

Dear Susie

A little home sick, wish I had my car so I could leave but am happy to be forced to stay. A "taking my life out of my own hands" kind of thing. That is part of what this trip is about. Chicago is a rapid transit town. The transit system gets around faster and cheaper than autos, most everyone who lives in the city uses it. Next comes bikes then only as needed cars.

It is 6am and I am going to the hotel's penthouse sauna and watch the sun rise

Love ya

10/10/2015

There are many great stories of the nobility and courage of mankind and individuals of note. They warm my heart, give me hope and peace. There are also many labors and ventures that reflect the values of those stories. This is the best of us. Walking around this city I photograph many of those noble ventures, the magnificent structures, works of art and on. What I miss in my shots, for the most, are the countless numbers of the members of the human race that play little or no part in these gentle stories. Those that labor for no reason but to survive and those disenfranchised by life itself the poor the elderly the homeless the sick or the insane individuals. All these many people go unnoticed throughout the city. To see them clearly is to see our own pretentious demeanor.

So as I roam the city streets photographing the sights I grow ever more uncomfortable with myself knowing there is something I am missing in my shots something I am not seeing not understanding. Over the days here I grapple with my uneasy tension and begin to understand that I too am marginalized disenfranchised and like so many I live in the delusion that I am not.

10/10

Spent the day meandering the "River Walk" to the old Navy pier taking pictures of couples in love locals walking their dogs and many other folks enjoying the warm Saturday. All this was refreshing from the hustle and bustle of the weekdays. It was a refreshing end of my trip. The smiles the laughter and warm eyes reminded me of Paris in the parks on a spring weekend day.

10/21/2015

A sponsee of mine, of long ago, called me last night with severe suicidal ideations. She asked if I would pick her up and take her to the ER. I did. I am okay but this is a 'bitch' to watch. The theme song for the movie 'MASH' came to me:

Through early morning fog I see
Visions of the things to be
The pains that are withheld for me
I realize that I can see

That suicide is painless
It brings so many changes
And I can take or leave them if I please

The game of life is hard to play
I'm gonna lose it anyway
The losing card of some delay
So this is all I have to say

That suicide is painless
It brings so many changes
And I can take or leave them if I please

The sword of time will pierce our skin
It doesn't hurt when it begins
But as it works its way on in
The pain grows stronger watch I bring

That suicide is painless
It brings so many changes
And I can take or leave them if I please

A brave man once requested me
To answer questions that are key
Is it to be or not to be
And I replied oh why ask me

That suicide is painless
It brings so many changes
And I can take or leave them if I please.

I have been reading the 'Essays of Montaigne'. According to "Wikipedia Michel Eyquem de Montaigne was one of the most significant philosophers of the French Renaissance, known for popularizing the essay as a literary genre." So they say. Mostly I think he sums up Socrates Plato Aristotle and other ancient western philosophers for the late 15th century adding a few 15th century tidbits on life and living, all relevant to today's world since we have not advanced, emotionally speaking, all that much since then let alone since Socrates's time.

Montaigne has a long essay on suicide. The 'MASH' theme takes much from that essay in this stanza:

The sword of time will pierce our skin
It doesn't hurt when it begins
But as it works its way on in
The pain grows stronger...

And the most compelling reason, in agonizing pain, not to commit to suicide is shallow at best if not completely hollow; that our life is God given and not ours to take. "So we suffer on and on to the bitter end"

As of today I am blind too much of this because 1) I have a high threshold to all kinds of pain. 2) I delude myself that everything is just fine. 3) I have a very strong drive to make something to leave behind other than a genetic reproduction of myself. And once I do one thing I am compelled to do another. 4) I am such an ass and I will show the world!

Now for the solution of "MASH": Okay suicide is an option, a viable option but first why not fake a kind of death? A transformation a rebirth using some kind of psychotropic chemical inducing a near death experience real or imaginary. That seems very logical to me. And I would hate to see my commitment to NA prevent me from recommending or personality using such an alternative to suicide itself. In deed such solutions have been use since the beginning of mankind. So I say "to those in unacceptable overwhelming pain and suffering

physical or mental those seriously contemplating suicide why not give this other option a try before you check out. Who knows, you may find some solution to dealing with the pain. If not, there is nothing lost and if it kills you so be it, you gave it a shot"

All my love to those in life's excruciating pain. One way or another it will pass.

10/27/15

Hi sweetheart

I have a favor to ask of you. When in the Marietta area, at a meeting or an event, please let me know about it. I heard you were at the Saturday 24hr fund raiser. I sure could have used the sight of your friendly face and your adorable smile. If I had known you would be there I would have made the effort to show up.

I work so hard not to appear needy and that effort is no working for me. Lately I have been discovering many of the activities I do to cover up my insecurities my needs my flaws and strengths too. All in an endless effort to be invisible. And sometimes in an effort to passively gain attention. All the energy I spend on all this worthless crap is affecting my health and well-being. It drains me of my finite 'spark of life'. The solution to all this inadequate behavior is to be direct in what I need and want, to myself and to others, "in the most loving and kind way" as we say in NA.

Love you very much

Take care and warm regards

Danielle

10/28/15

I still sit in my room looking out its many windows viewing the world not just in my cage but in a cage that is in a box that has other smaller boxes that have tubes transistors and screens within them. And to reach out I tap my fingers on a keyboard or a mouse that have visible or invisible wirers that lead into one of those smaller boxes. Sometimes I take my cage and one of the small boxes out of the big box, climb into a box with wheels, move down a large flattened wire that stretches across a landscape past other boxes that if I desire, and I often do, I can go into and buy boxes of made up stuff. On this flattened wire I can travel other great cities of boxes or landscapes of green long ago designed by men of dreams who lived in boxes of antiquity. I pick up my small box that holds my class eye and I snap an image of what it sees take it back to my box home plug it into the box that processes what was seen by the eye box and

I look at it, pretend I saw the real thing, then send it out to all the other boxes throughout the landscape of our lives so those that wish to see can see it and then claim that it and I are real.

All this is a contemporary version of Plato's 'Allegory of the Cave'.

It is odd to think that a vision from four hundred some years before the birth of Jesus Christ still to this day holds true. No matter how radical how far out there one goes, that distance from the reflection on the wall is not that far away. That a trip outside of the 'cave' is so overwhelming that it is blinding and mind blowing possibly to the point of insanity. So I gear up, put on my armor my shield and venture out never knowing how far I go, if I ever get close to the 'cave entrance' let alone outside of the 'cave'. My shell my guard against insanity is always with me.

In the meantime, with the aid of modern technology, I can reach out with my glass eyes; present and vision of myself for all to see and see all the visions presented by others. I can scroll through the history of it all see whatever comes my way old and new living in the cave at a level of view that only philosophers of old had with the knowledge that, not everyone but, many humans can see further than humanity has ever seen before. Will I ever have the courage to drop my shield and burn to a crisp? I do not know.

11/4/2015

If you have the experience, if you have lived long enough you can see it. You know. The path another person is on; the state they are in will lead to their demise or at least a big clusterfuck. We comfort the victims with words of empathy and consolation. Rarely do we warn the victim or advise them that a few more steps down this path there will be no return. Rarer still is the victim heading that advice. So we go on consoling others we see heading down a path of destruction letting them know everything will be okay. Then after they die or crash or whatever the end is we act surprised, shocked. We console ourselves with words and ideas of "Rest in peace; you are now in God's hands; you are in a better place" and on and on reminiscing only to comfort the living along with the reminder to stay blind seeing it before it happens is too painful.

God grant me the serenity to accept what I cannot change and the courage to speak out even though nothing will change.

Sincerely

Danielle

11/6/15

We are alone. We live in a world where the denial of that fact is ever present all encompassing. Yet in the back of our minds the truth lives on ever nagging ever pushing at our illusions. "No Man is an island" we say as we toss out the imaginary and fragile golden thread that binds itself to other golden threads in a hope that the bond is forever and with a wisp of a soft breeze the golden thread crumbles to sparkling star dust. Off we drift alone and we weave a new golden thread to toss out again and again and again. It is within that imagining, that weaving, that we place all our hope and dreams our faith only to be scattered once again. On and on the weaving goes. Some are masters of this task other not so skilled. Some weave an incredible golden net that can gather up a sea of hearts and souls that they carry throughout all their lives. Others can barely weave a single line that with some luck will briefly snag one hope and with even more luck that one hope will not slip away. Others are caught in a masterful nets hopes and dreams that carry them to their end. Still others find no dream no hope their thread dangling thin and weak catching nothing and there being drifts through any net that comes there way leaving them forlorn.

Now back away even more and like the space we live in, vast distances between us, what becomes more visible is the massive tapestry resembling the stars and heavens above us. What is a realm of beings alone stretching out imaginary golden threads forming the beauty of our existence in this moment. A story both real and imaginary coming together making a whole of our existence. Beautiful and miraculous. Both in the real and in the unreal.

11/10/15

Hi Dan,

I hope all is well with you, thank you for reaching out and emailing me. Business Is picking up this month and it is crunch time to get listings up on eBay. This will be the case till the beginning of February.

Last month I took a trip to Chicago, a beautiful very busy city. You can see the pictures of that trip and other pictures too at: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/danielleinga/>

Life has been good, still a little lonely but managing to reach out and be active. I spend a lot of time working on my photography skills. That is my big joy. I shot a wedding for my friends last week, so doing stuff with others and doing what I love... that is the best!

I am still here in Marietta Ga close to my son and the grandchildren. That is a great joy also.

Let me know how you are and what you have been up to.

Sincerely and kind regards

Danielle

11/20/15

Hi Kathleen,

Last night I talked to a psychiatrist, he has a private practice in Atlanta and also works for the State and Federal judicial system determining mental competency in trial cases. He thinks the 'intervention' is a good idea. "Best if everyone shares what they see and how they feel.... don't overwhelm... keep it simple." "In the end it will be up to him (Matt)." He too thinks the best approach for any abused person is to get out of the situation. Also he said people that are border line narcissistic or full blown narcissistic do not physically harm others any more than the average person. They are more likely to be self-destructive. He reiterated "You guys are on the right track, trust your instincts show love and support."

I think we all start out very self-centered it does not take much time to learn that by being attentive to others aids in our self-interest. Given more time being compassionate and caring also assists our own needs to be accepted and loved. Not everyone gets that far. But to be free, fulfilled and truly happy, according to philosophers religious figures and history, requires a deep personal understanding of self and some ability to get past that by doing for others without any expectation of reward. Not all the time we are not saints nor are saints totally disinterested in self-will. A good balance of understood self-interest and altruistic acts seems to be sufficient but even the best of us humans slide back. Vigilance is a valuable asset in this regard.

Human beings are such flawed creatures but we have time to overcome much of that. I trust Matt's ability to not only survive but to also thrive and persevere in these difficult times he faces

Sincerely

Danielle

11/24/2015

Best time of my life.

Dear Matthew

There is nothing but now, the present moment. Even with all the pain we may feel all the heartbreak, all that we have is just one little moment and then it is gone and the next moment is upon us. We can carry our heartbreak or our joy through each moment we live and make it new or let it pass away. So when we reflect on what is the best time of our life, there is only one true answer, it is now. That is all we have and if it is filled with sorrow it still is the best we have and worthy of our living it to its fullest.

Change is always with us from moment to moment. We can bring our past and are hopes with us or not. Living the moment with great expectations or letting it surprise us with its own presence.

It was so good to see you the babies and your mother over that last few days. I love you very much.

Peace out.

11/27/15

Falling into winter

Heal, love, transform, service. These long held principles, since the beginning of recorded history, come down and through many teachings, religions and philosophies. They may seem simple and easy to grasp yet it can take a lifetime the gleam even a slight understanding of them. Take the first one, heal; how do we know what to heal? Where does it hurt? What do we do with it when we find it? How can we tell if it is real or made up? This is where I am today. Maybe I will be here for many days to come, I do not know. I reside in my body I mostly hang around in my head. Lately I have been roaming out of my head and into other parts of the body. This is what I have discovered; There are constructions and judgments, some my own some social some both, lingering in parts of my body causing pains irritations and suffering. The ones casing the suffering are the most malignant. For example, there is one that lingers around my heart and up into my lower neck, I titled it 'Holliday Blues' even though it is there throughout the year this is the time it is at its strongest. The feeling it evokes is 'forever lonely'. All this may sound silly and what I am doing about it may sound ever

sillier. When I meditate I move my thought to that part of my body sense it and give it mindful attention placing my hand on the area of pain siting silently observing. Sometimes I say one of those Buddhist chant sounds and it vibrates around the area of my intention. Sometimes I cry as the pain grows sometimes I cry as the pain dissipates. I am not sure where any of this is going, my sense is there is some real or imaginary healing going on. Maybe noting is going on but at best I know where it hurts it has a name and I can touch it. That is much better than wondering 'what the fuck is going on'.

12/13/2015

Yesterday's Fog

Yesterday's fog began the night before with an evening of low hanging clouds lit from behind by a pale full moon. Trees with their dark fingers reaching, stretching up to the sky imagining that they hold those shimmering clouds up.

The next morning those clouds had dropped low to the ground sharing the illusion with the trees that they too were high above the ground higher than the trees had ever been. My morning walk was in the clouds with the trees.

12/29/2015

I am the destroyer of Vishnu
The assassin of that which is everything
The sorrow that disturbs

In my peace I wreak havoc
My passion bleeds out the universe
And my harmony breeds disorder

I am restless when all is at rest
Boisterous when the world calls for silence
Uneasy with my own ease

12/30/2015

I am up early this morning with a little time to catch up on my email. This Holiday season has been mildly irritating because of a cold and the absence of my roommate who seasonally brings about some holiday cheer and merriment. Regardless I have kept busy with connecting with friends and family along with the usual seasonal work.

Outside of the usual commitments and obligations this year has been one of numerous travels, acquiring camera gear, developing exercise habits, delving deeper into philosophy / spirituality and ramping up my photography and meditation skills. The longer I am around I find that few if anybody really gives a shit. I lack the fame needed to bring in the kind of attention my ego would like to have. Hence the meditation to find some peace in it all, to find the drive to continue and not be so wrapped up in the outcome because for the most there is little or no outcome the even comes close to fulfilling my bullshit desires. Besides I lack something, maybe it is egocentric stamina or drive not sure what it is, that would move me into the self-promotion needed for that thing called "socioeconomic success". Hence I dabble on the periphery comforting myself with meditation philosophy and spirituality reluctantly.

All in all, life is very good to me. My ego, not necessarily crushed, has been deflated. My drive to be active to do is still alive and strong. I care much less about why and the outcome. There is a kind of freedom in that.

That is about it for this year. Next year, without looking too far forward, will be a surprise with some confidence that whatever comes I can handle it. Maybe even get a few chuckles out of it as I did this year.

It is almost 6am Time to get the day started.

Love and peace
Danielle

1/6/2016

In a day how much can I change?
In a day many lives end many begin.
In a day a world can turn.

1/13/2016

The death of David Bowie

We, all of us will die. From birth we begin the dying. It is neither sad or unexpected though the thought of it is avoided abstracted and made impersonal causing us discomfort with the death of others. Our thoughts go to our loss our sorrow and sometimes sympathy to loved ones left behind. Still our nagging fear of death and our denial of its coming and the coming of the final question for the dying "Was my life meaningful?" lingers in the background. At our end this question comes looming over us all pervasive and the fear of it weighs more than the fear of our upcoming death.

I cannot answer that question for David only he and maybe some of his loved ones know that. What I can say is that David Bowie lived an extraordinary life leaving behind a body of art that will last some time beyond his physical presence. A gift to me that I am very grateful for because it is part of what gives meaning and inspiration to my own life. 'Starman' will be with me on my deathbed and I will smile.

1/13/2016

Evening

I am no Gandhi or Nietzsche no Tolstoy or Buddha. Yet in the modern world I live I know the suffering around me and I know my privilege and place in this industrial consumer life I live is a part of the cause. I know that most all my purchases my fulfilled wants and desires my consumption all a part of the cause of this suffering for those far and near who lack my privileged life. And I excuse myself with the simple fact that we all are doing it and I am just a part of the consumer crowd spurred on by all the forces of commerce trade and political rightness. I scream in my "head what the fuck am I doing" in this simple ordinary life of mine for sixty-six years in it. Starting from sixteen I read about the Gandhis Buddhas Aristotles Nietzsches and the rest the jumble of it all. The films of Modern Times Grapes of Wrath all feeding my mind yet none breaking me free from my shackles of consumption and the pain of the wreckage of my spent dollars was casing. So I dumped my bread into piles of dope blinding me even more from the truth once so apparent in a child's eyes. Years of blundering blindness with occasional efforts to rip the veil from my face only to see the miracles of industry standing supreme before me in tall buildings of Macy's Bloomingdales Nordstrom's Tiffany

and so much more all too soon to be the Amazon of our future. All this wanting me to partake from the bounty of success and be a part of the American Dream and that too will soon be an ice cream label that I consume like all the doped up narcotics in my life. A high class user in a high driven world of things that drive my feeling into the ground of failure so I can be just like the Jones next door.

So now I come clean from years of drug use and in that daze I search for recovery of my life and what that means. Again I face all the madness of my hopes and wants dive in again with the acquiring the getting those objects that make up a productive member of society. I hark back to the old philosophers and in a few years it all comes back to me in the form of step eight, where it is most often left out, is all the harm I have caused with all the blatant consumer consumption in the name of desire greed or just being a good modern citizen following the status quo blindly with the herd and wondering how I make amends with all this shit stuff around me, with all the consumption?

1/17/2016

I can no longer tolerate my own level of denial my own deception my own avoidance of what goes on around me. For a lack of a better world I call it suffering; the suffering of the planet and all the creatures that exist on it both near and far. In some ways I must disinterest myself, look upon it with some level of acceptance and disassociation or I will go mad. But my illusion of "peace and harmony in the world" must go. My own refusal to see, my self-preservation at all cost, my buying into a social norm that is intolerable must end. For me self-awareness, mindful living, finding my true happiness, being an effective human being all means to see honestly without judgment or bias. To be effective I cannot be overwhelmed by it all hence I must keep a mindful distance. To be happy I cannot overly participate in it yet still find my way through it with some kind of acceptance. To be happy I cannot be just an observer but be too active. Not active as a leader or teacher, rather for me to be creative also to restore. These are my skills. My work in life is to use them hone them and make a better place not just for me alone.

4/16/16

Dear Susie

On our last phone call much was left unsaid, as it should be over the phone. What I want to say may best be said in writing if I can even say it at all.

We all of us have everything we will every need to live a peaceful fulfilled human existence in us. This is not to say there will not be problems, there will always be problems. But the suffering, that has more to do with our doing not life's doing. The lack of trust and confidence in ourselves, the lack of knowing how to live a humane existence, keeps us in a state of conflict with life and ourselves. The ways of learning how are numerable. The trust and confidence in ourselves that is the thing that is fleeting and mysterious, yet it forever still resides within us waiting to be taken up.

4/17/16

Last night I had a dream that I used narcotics. I woke from that dream to find I was still in a dream where within my fellowship the only sin is to use narcotics. I told one close trusted friend that I had used. The world spread rapidly and my status within my fellowship diminished. Soon it became known that I did not use that it was only a dream and that I had let it be known that I did use in order to see the reaction of my fellows I was ostracized. Though not completely banished words of hate and resentment were said. Only one person stayed by my side and saw the meaning and irony of my actions. End of dream.

5/1/16

Dear Chris,

Thank you for talking with me after the meeting, it is difficult to express all the thoughts and concerns I have with the fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous. I do enjoy and respect when you share your hope strength and experience. I can tell that it comes from sincerity and authenticity. I appreciate that.

That said I want to continue my focus on a systemic problem, as I see it, in the way we share at meetings in Narcotics Anonymous. Indeed, I am making a judgment in using the word 'problem' but I do believe the word systemic is suitable in that my theory covers the majority of NA.

My hypothesis: The disease of addiction is ruttet is self-centeredness selfish and greedy. Basically an ego without regard for the feelings or desires of others (egocentric). Much of our

sharing at NA meetings reflects that disease. Right there my hypothesis fails at this point; Much of our sharing does take regard of the feelings and desires of others. I will need to think this over.

6/12/16

Writing on step eleven

First paragraph:

"The first ten steps have set the stage for us to improve our conscious contact with the God of our understanding." What is 'conscious contact' and how is it 'improved'? This is the first stumbling block for me. The view of my 'higher power' is indistinct and that is as it should be. Indeed, that is by design for my higher power is not meant to have a clear set image because then it becomes an idol of worship. An occasional insight is fine, some contemplation and meditation, but if there was any will there it would be "Be yourself and forget about Me". Even that is saying too much. As for prayer that is out of the question, at best that is just wishful thinking at worst delusional. I do get this and like this line "Our spiritual condition is the basis for a successful recovery that offers unlimited growth." The 'unlimited growth' that is easier said than done. That covers the first paragraph.

The next five paragraphs are all about surrender:

Taken at its face value the Basic Text's view of 'Surrender' goes dead against the will of my Higher Power. A great deal of interpretation, stretching the meaning and reading between the lines is needed to make it palatable. To "be myself" to be fully human and actualized I need to exercise my powers not dismiss them, my power of reason to love to imagine to be productive in a mindful way to be my own authority to exercise my own authentic conscience, these and more powers are what being human being alive is about. To neglect this is to neglect self-awareness and the realization of recovery. There is an element within NA the Basic Text the Eleventh Step that indicates we must look outside of ourselves to find an authority greater than ourselves that will guide us to some kind of fulfillment. That is not surrender that is submission. Anyway that is how I see it.

For the rest of step eleven more is written about God's will for us, God's love for us, using prayer to ask for that love using meditation to hear God's will. Little of that makes any sense to

me and I am not going to spend much time translating it to fit my understanding.

I like the idea of meditating to quiet the mind in paragraph 11 12 and 13 "Quieting the mind through meditation brings an inner peace... Quieting the mind through meditation brings an inner peace... Emotional balance is one of the first results of meditation..." All this holds very true for me.

There is a brief mentioning of religious zeal causing us to forget we are addicts and taking us back to using. I have seen that happen.

Other parts that strike me positively are "We become willing to let other people be who they are... We begin to see more clearly what is real... We respect the beliefs of Others. We encourage you to seek strength and guidance according to your belief..." There is a line that struck me ambiguously "God's will for us becomes our own true will for ourselves." Living as an addict and living in this modern world I lost track of my authentic conscience long ago. Getting it back has not been an easy thing and is still on going. I can still shame myself, I can use non-authentic ideas beliefs and morals to cause me to act in ways I am not sure of. Doing things out of some kind of "duty" to this or that cause this or that person, social pressure I believe to be my own conscience but it is not. So this idea of using a "Higher Power's" will is just the bridge many addicts need to find their own authentic conscience. For me it has been a long hard struggle just to know whose conscience is active within me at any given time. And it the steps have helped me find that way. Without being free from active addiction I would never have gotten this far.

In the last paragraph "By helping others to stay clean, we enjoy the benefit of the spiritual wealth that we have found." As of today me helping others stay clean has mostly been willy-nilly and the joy I have received far outnumbers the amount of 'help' I can offer. I do see the tremendous amount of suffering within the addict community and outside of that community also. My abilities to relieve my own suffering let alone others is limited. I do see that growing. I am a social being. I am a member of Narcotics Anonymous Any discomfort any social pressure to conform, any need to please others is in my head and my job to clear that up. The fellowship offers a wide array of ideas and beliefs to choose from that stand on principles of open mindedness honesty and others. The problems and struggles I have are interpersonal and are outweighed by the good qualities.

06/22/2016

On being asked to speak from the heart.

No true words can speak from the heart that is in me so I have a Fairytale:

There once was a boy child who had a dream that was to come true. In his shame his fear his anguish he covered himself with a blanket and went to sleep. A minute or hour or eternity went by and out of the blanket came an old maid with a trunk of all that she had and all that she was. Spending ten years she went through that trunk finding mostly trash and excrement till she finally came to a small velvet pouch containing a tiny seed. She planted it in the ground tending it lovingly. In a time, it bloomed for just one day and then died leaving behind a dozen or so seeds. To her that flower was the most beautiful thing. She gathered the seeds up, put them in the velvet pouch and placed it next to her heart.

7/12/16

A still river reflects your beauty
The frog leaps to the other shore
Ripples multiply your light's sheen

7/15/16

A pond reflects and holds the moon
Frog jumps to other shore
Reflections vanish

8/14/16

12th Step

For me compassion is at the heart of this step. Yes, other ethical principles also compassion is my twisted up in a knot principle. I use it to justify my people pleasing; to justify my manipulation of people in my life so I don't feel so lonely, so I don't feel so afraid.

For me there is a fine line between being compassionate or kind to others and being manipulative so others are dependent on me. I am not void of empathy to others suffering, I can see the misery and hardships of others. I can, at times, do altruistic acts of kindness and compassion for others. In my closest relationships that gray area, that fuzzy line is there. As time goes on as I work through these steps and work to understand

accept and love myself I see my own dysfunctional needs playing a part in those long and close relationships. Most of the time recognizing it is the best I can do. Sometimes I can step aside act in a positive healthful way. Today that takes much effort meditation and concentration to accomplish and still I slip back.

Carrying the message of NA to addicts. I can only seek within myself and do as best as I can. Sometimes there is little there, other times more.

There are no words that can truly say what is in my heart. They all miss the mark. These Come the closest:

Moon shines bright in still waters
As I step into the stream
Reflection's light scatters in the ripples
Momentarily the moon is lost again

8/21/16

The reflection of the moon lit cat
Falls as she refreshes herself in its waters

Always hungry even when the body is not

8/23/16

Beach Jumper Unit-1 Detachment CHARLIE was under the operational control of Commander Task Force 77 and operated under the cover name "Yankee Station Special Surveillance Unit". Their mission was to deceive and jam Soviet Signal Intelligence (SIGINT) and Electrical Intelligence (ELINT) trawlers that were monitoring US Naval operations in the Gulf of Tonkin. Detachment CHARLIE conducted counter SIGINT trawler activities which included random wave jamming with noises which even included rock and roll recordings. The most requested musician from the Russian trawlers was Jimi Hendrix.

8/24/16

'Can't buy me love... I don't care too much for money, money can't buy me love'

Easy to say "I don't care too much for money" not so easy to put into practice. Money is a marker of my success, if I am a winner or loser, or just breakeven which is kind of a loser also.

In active addiction I was a big loser, money ran through my fingers like water or should I say smoke, a fog of narcotics sucked in and with every breath I said to myself 'loser'.

Indeed, I was losing. Every wonder why I hate the admission "I am an addict"? Addict = loser, ever reminding me labeling me. Money and valuable possessions to ease the pain, artificially removing the stigma of the 'loser' label.

Just before becoming a member of Narcotics Anonymous my parents died and left me an inheritance. It was true, what the probate attorney said, "not a 'never work again' kind of inheritance but a 'life changing' inheritance no the less". First things first stop using dope! I could not do it alone, that is where NA came in to my life. The money in the bank the nice home the new car gave my ego my self-esteem a big boost up. In recesses of my mind, in the sub of my brain hidden just below awareness, "You did not earn that money it was giving to you, everything has always been given to you, you loser you addict you will always be."

Life goes on. My work is a little more than break even.

Sometimes more than that. Social Security benefits are equal to what my parents gave me every month when they were alive, ironic in my view. And every time I say "My name is Danielle and I am an addict" I am reminded that I am a loser.

Yes, it is true money can't buy me love but its existence its cushion has been very comforting and very distracting. As that money dwindles as recovery grows the unlinking subconscious notion of worthlessness bubbles to consciousness. Panic sets in, "sell sell sell, run run run" I don't, at least not without some contemplation, recovery has shown me another way; go forward or go backwards. Going backwards too many steps is the way to the comfort of denial, been there done that too much. Backwards is not a viable option.

Today; I have money in the bank, nowhere near what I had nine years ago, I have a home worth more than what I paid for it, I have businesses assets, I have a program that helps me stay clean. I have anxieties fears judgments resentments beliefs opinions thoughts commitments values principles a meditative

practice and more. Today there is some importance to what 'I have' I give them some attention. The things 'I have' pop in and out of conscious view, they bring me pain and pleasure. But today what 'I have' is not as important as 'who am I today at this moment'. Today what I have does not define me as much as it did yesterday. What to do with all that 'I have' not sure yet. Check with me tomorrow.

11/13/16

We rest ourselves on stolen land

We took our heritage and placed it on another's

We killed the buffalo and the bear and them too

We are blind to our own sins

We carry on as if all this is ours, never accepting the truth.

We are a lost people with no real tribe

As lost as the people our ancestors have destroyed

11/17/16

Donald Trump is foolish and a smart ass. He is like a spider wanting to tranquilize everyone making them whittles and miserable.

I lost my faith to reason long ago. I cried over that loss, got up and moved on.

Like the proverb "the last straw", for me, the election of Donald Trump was that last straw.

I witnessed, on television, the death of John F. Kennedy Martin Luther King and Bobby Kennedy. I saw the rise and fall of Lyndon B. Johnson Richard Nixon Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter. I watched the presidential administrations of Ronald Reagan George H. W. Bush Bill Clinton George W. Bush and Barack Obama. Some I favored some I disliked, all had assets and liabilities, but all were tempered within the political body. All took the daunting painful path of many years facing the electorate.

Now a poser a buffoon a television celebrity aka real-estate mogul business man offers a prize a dream a change a cheap illusion, not unlike all the rest but with a phony authority

wrapped in nationalism and intimidation that seduces many to vote for him and at the same time numbs many not to vote at all. A side note, that numbing of the populace has been going on long before Trump.

Many of my friends dislike political banter, I understand that, but I believe we are social animals. And I believe political and civic discourse is the highest of our social activity no matter how messy and uncomfortable it may be. Not our movies our television shows what we wear what we buy the photos we take or the games we play have a greater effect on our lives than our politics.

I have lost my trust in our electorate this last week. I cry over that loss. I will get up and move on.

I will say no more about this election. "it is what it is" btw I hate that saying.

P.S. I know there are 'friends' that will dislike what I say about president elect Trump. Please feel free to comment on my opinion but any incendiary comments will be deleted.

11/18/16

I come with a catalog of habitual expressions, gestures, postures and props that have become my own through long use. I seek the state of my child; unfixed, formative and ambiguous.

11/19/16

"The companies that hauled the oil away were called renderers. Besides restaurant oil, renderers also collected animal carcasses—pigs and sheep and cows from slaughterhouses, offal thrown out by butcher shops and restaurants, euthanized cats and dogs from the pound, dead pets from veterinary clinics, deceased zoo animals, roadkill. Mounds of animals were trucked to the rendering plant and bulldozed into large pots for grinding and shredding; then the raw meat product was dumped into pressure cookers, where fat separated from meat and bones at high heat. The meat and bones were pulverized into protein meal for canned pet food. The animal fat became yellow grease, which was recycled for lipstick, soap, chemicals, and livestock feed. So cows ate cow, pigs ate pig, dogs ate dog, cats ate cat, and human beings ate the meat fed on dead meat, or smeared it over their faces and hands. Rendering was one of the oldest industries in the country, going back to the age of tallow, lard, and candlelight, and one of the most secretive."

— George Packer, *The Unwinding: An Inner History of the New America*.

I am going to go vomit now.

11/22/16

"People do not want a likeness they want an idealization that will fill in their inadequacies."

David Bachrach

11/24/16

I woke this morning with memories of dream. Dreams of building new homes and destroying old homes, a mix mash of turmoil sorrow and joy.

I also woke with a remembrance of a question that was brought to me, over coffee yesterday, by my friend Eric Jennings. "What makes a great photographer?" I muddled through the answer haphazardly grabbing at straws of some unorganized insight and some bull shit, feeling uncomfortable with my remarks. This morning I did some research some deeper thinking and this is what I have.

What makes a great photographer? First and foremost is:
Mastering the art of photography.

What the camera sees

The visual elements of shape texture form color and how to display and combine them.

Principles of design and making them work

Balance proportion rhythm perspective, these are the dominate features

Responding to the Subject with a personal view.

Time

Photography explores the dimensions of time within the shutter speed. Suspended time the decisive moment the random moment movement-blurred image and many other aspects of time within the photograph.

Challenging the traditions and find your style.

The understanding of these principles at work and a pursuit of excellence that reaps a consistent body of great photographs, that is the mark of a great photographer.

Secondary and assisting of all this is:

Mastering the camera, the lens and their settings

Mastering the art of lighting

Mastering the art of the darkroom, Lightroom, Photoshop the plug-ins and extensions.

A thorough understanding of film stock (old school but relevant).

11/25/16

There are approximately 250 million adult voters in the united states. 3 million of them are in the armed forces, reserves and police forces.

A little over 125 million people voted in the last presidential election, Hillary Clinton getting around 63.55 million and Donald Trump getting around 62 million.

The civil rights march on Washington D.C. in 1963 was Attended by 250 thousand people. In 1996 the Million Man March was 400 thousand people. The March for Life (a pro-life rally) in 2013 was estimated at 650 thousand people.

An estimated 5 million people attended the Chicago Cubs World Series parade 2016

15 million people visited the shrine of Husayn ibn Ali in Kabala Iraq during Arba'een January 2013

Over 30 million people bathed at the Triveni Sangam in Allahabad India for the Maha Kumbh Mela on February 10 2013

What is the point of all these statistics? I am not sure. But if 30 million people can take a bath in the same place on the same day and 5 million Americans can attend the Cubs World Series parade, why can't a few million concerned women peacefully gather in Washington D.C.'s National Mall?

11/26/16

Women's march on Washington D.C.

6,950 people are talking about this On Facebook

Women's shoes.

84,523 people are talking about this on Facebook

I think I am living in an insane world

A group of Native Americans and nonnatives, for months now, have been protesting the 1,170-mile Dakota Access Pipeline on Turtle Island near Standing Rock Reservation in North Dakota. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, who manage that area, have ordered the protesters to vacate the camp site by the fifth of December "due to the concern for public safety... to protect the general public from the violent confrontations between protesters and law enforcement officials that have occurred in this area... and the fact that much of this land is leased to private persons for grazing and/or haying purposes as part of the corps' land management practices"

Mahatma Gandhi on March 12 1930 began a 24-day march to the Arabian Sea at the coastal village of Dandi to render salt from the sea. This was a non-violent direct action. (A direct action occurs when someone or a group takes an action which is intended to reveal and existing problem.) Over 80 thousand people were jailed for the nonviolent civil disobedience of making salt. Gandhi was jailed for nine months. Did this change the 'salt laws'? In 1944 the laws were revised. Greater still the salt

march lead to India's independence from Great Britain in August 15, 1947.

The 1960's Civil Rights Movement was characterized by major campaigns of civil resistance that brought attention to the inequities faced by African Americans. Campaigns such as the Montgomery bus boycott, the Greensboro sit-ins, Selma to Montgomery Marches, freedom rides, voter registration organizing, the march on Washington. Many of these acts of nonviolent civil disobedience had an outcome of numerous arrests, violence against protesters and death including the death of Martin Luther King. They also had an outcome that brought about the passage of major pieces of federal legislation; The Civil Rights Act of 1964, The Voting Rights Act of 1965, The Immigration and Nationality Services Act of 1965 and the Fair Housing Act of 1968.

Non-violent direct action to reveal and existing problem, to highlight an alternative solution to a social issue or just to stand up and be accounted for is still a viable action to take. How we go about it in this postmodern digital age is the challenge we must face, as individuals as a group a people a nation and as a world.

11/27/2016

There are approximately 250 million adult eligible voters. Around 62 million voters voted for Donald Trump. 188 million eligible voters did not vote for Trump.

Methods of Self-Analyses.

- 1) Remember intrusive thoughts during meditation and then 'feel around' them in the aim if they have any connection and what that might be.
- 2) Free Association. One lets go of one's thought control, permits one's thoughts to come in, scrutinize them with the aim of discovering hidden connections between them, points of resistance until certain elements come to one's awareness.

- 3) Speculations about one's history beginning with early childhood. Ask: On whom am I dependent? What are my main fears? Who was I meant to be at birth? What were my goals and how did they change? What were the forks of the road where I took the wrong direction and went the wrong way? What efforts did I make to correct the error and return to the right way? Who am I now? What is the image of myself? (read more on page 70)
- 4) Uncover the discrepancies that exist between our conscious goals in life and those of which we are not aware yet which determine our life. The 'official' plot and the 'secret plot'. (page 73)
- 5) Let one's thoughts and feelings be centered around the goals of living such as overcoming greed, hate, illusions, fears, possessiveness, narcissism, destructiveness, sadism, masochism, dishonesty, lack of authenticity, alienation, indifference... (page 75-80)

11/28/16

The premise is:

We live in an insane culture society and world. Every institution every social group every organization supports and or fosters that insanity.

If you deny that premise in whole there is nothing for us to talk about.

What is the Theory? More will be revealed.

11/29/16

Dream

I am, old a little senile physically near decrepit and ornery reminding me of my grandfather, I am at a hospital not sure of my appointment time. Is it 10:30 or 1:30 or maybe I have two appointments I do not know. I am in a room with a bed and I am stuffing a large backpack with all my belongings. A male aid come is and lets me know it is time for my appointment. I am a little upset because I cannot get everything in the pack. A lady friend comes in the room to help, but I will have none of that, I will do it on my own. She sits quietly in a chair. I keep stuffing the pack. It is over flowing. The attendant returns with another attendant to assist and rush me along. I wink at the first attendant then pretend to be very senile and absentminded to the new attendant making him feel ill at ease. The first attendant smiles and winks back my friend sits submissively and demure looking down into her lap. The attendants leave. My mother comes into the room. She has smooth skin a dancer's movability and a youthful mind. She is dressed in all white, ballet slippers a soft flowing pleated skirt and a cashmere top. She tells me she is going back home back to Belgium. I appear indifferent uninterested but I feel lost, conflicted I want her to stay and care for me, yet I want her to go, so I can go so I can be free to die in peace. I stuff more in my overflowing backpack as she leaves the room dancing. My friend says it is time for your appointment. I put on the overloaded backpack walk out of the room with my friend, down the hall to a large open foyer then to a stairwell. And she directs us to go down. I say "hell now I am taking the elevator. I walk away leaving her standing by the stairwell looking bewildered and melancholy. I move back into the foyer yell out "where's the god damn elevator. A lady at the concession stand points over to my left. I walk over to a small over crowded elevator and squeeze in. As the door closes, with the heavy pack on my back, I look through the porthole of the door at my friend standing by the stairwell and I think to myself defiantly "finally I'm alone" and I cry.

My need to be alone has more to do with not wanting to feel inferior to everyone

Texas v. Johnson, 491 U.S. 397 (1989)

The US Supreme Court decided the First Amendment to the Constitution says it's unconstitutional for a government (whether federal, state or town) to prohibit the desecration of a flag, because it's seen as "symbolic speech."

11/30/16

In a few days I will be embarking on a road trip. Unlike my usual road trips this one has a sense of urgency and importance, indeed it seems more like a quest. I will be driving up to Standing Rock Sioux Indian reservation North Dakota access pipeline protest. I see this as the heart of our American struggle pain and promise, the one only a few want to really look at. In my heart this seems like my last change to free myself from my own cowardice, submissive, needy nature or at least a viable attempt because I may fail in this personal challenge. All my life, from the time I can remember, I have shied away from my truth and hid from it. If I did act on it, it was because I stumbled into it and was forced to deal with it. Never willfully or wholeheartedly have I engaged in life. We talked of courage, this is my true test of that. I have never felt so afraid.

12/10/16

"The long delayed but always expected something that we live for."

Tennessee Williams

1/6/17

Dear Janice

Wonderful talking to you last night. It is always a pleasure. When it comes to some subjects, such as Zen Buddhism recovery the 12 steps politics religion and such, I find myself zealous with a lack of words to fully express my attitude.

I am sending you a reading list. Some are audio books some are books. Some you may find to your liking some not. These are books in my library that I keep going back to time after time and each time I find something new within them.

[The Meaning of Life: Perspectives from the World's great Intellectual traditions](#)

By The Great Courses

Narrated by Professor Jay L Garfield

Audible Book

[The Art of Being](#)

By Erich Fromm

Narrated by Raymond Todd

Audible Kindle and paperback book

[Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind: Informal Talks on Zen Meditation and Practice](#)

By: Shunryu Suzuki

Narrated by: Peter Coyote

Audible Kindle and paperback book

[The Hidden Lamp: Stories from Twenty-Five Centuries of Awakened Women](#)

By: Zenshin Florence Caplow

Audible Kindle and paperback book

[Zen Flesh, Zen Bones: A Collection of Zen and Pre-Zen Writings](#)

AKA: Gateless Gate

Compiled by: Paul Reys

Narrated by: Peter Coyote

Audible Kindle and paperback book

[The Heart of Buddhist Meditation: The Buddha's Way of Mindfulness](#)

By Nyanaponika Thera

Kindle and paperback book

[The Thinking Body: A Study of the Balancing Forces of Dynamic Man](#)

By: Mable Ellsworth Todd

Kindle and paperback book

1/18/17

Dear Chris

My journal writings on last night's support group.

Philosophy:

The study of the fundamental nature of knowledge, reality, and existence, especially when considered as an academic discipline.
(Google definition)

The study of the meaning of life and how to achieve that meaningful life as it pertains to the human being.
(my definition)

Being a 'deep person' a person of depth is often, in my view mistakenly although it can be true, is equated to a 'philosophical person'

To me a person of depth is a curious person, dedicated to reading and thinking and can infer on what is read and thought.

A person that is teachable and can discuss ideas without defense
and can accommodate alternative viewpoints.

I strive to be a person of depth. I also study philosophy.

1/23/17

Song of the harper

Be of good cheer

Forgetfulness is advantages to you

Follow your heart's desire all your life

Anoint your head with myrrh

Cloth yourself in fine linen

Do things while you are here on earth

Do not grieve till the day of lamentation overtakes you

Enjoy life and do not grow weary of it

No one takes his possessions out of this life and no one who has
departed returns.

Unknown Egyptian

2100 BC

1/28/17

Plato's cave allegory

Start by taking it as viable. If it is viable today it is like
we are all in a theater watching a movie reflected on a screen
and that movie is more real than our actual existence. Okay back
to oldie-time Greece and the city of Athens. Plato and a few of
his buddies decide to get off their asses leave the theater and
get hooked up to the 'real' reality. La la la they go waking
around looking at the 'real' real seeing how marvelous it is and
they begin to pity their poor brethren inside the dark theater
missing all the fun. So, this small group goes about forming a
plan to free their other fellows. One of the newest youngest of
students raises his hand and asks "what about the slaves and the
women?" Plato says "what slaves what women?" The young boy says
"Why the ones over there and there and there again to your
left." Plato says "I don't see them you must be hallucinating or
on drugs"

The cave allegory is best explained with the 1999 film 'The Matrix'.

Funny that we must go watch something reflected on a screen to see how fucked up we really are.

It is the arts and those individuals that have the shattered bleeding heart open enough to work as an artist, that give the rest of us the opportunity to get a momentary glimpse of reality as it really is.

01/28/17

My new definition of Addiction:

Craving without the ability to impose moderation.

We often see ourselves as degenerate and weak-willed. Maybe in some sense we are, maybe we are constantly degrading ourselves into self-hatred.

Those of us that suffer from addiction and seek the 'cure' often use radical means (asceticism) to obtain the ability to moderate ourselves.

This process of recovery; The renunciation of our "devil" our senses and finding a balance within abstinence, our dire need of abstinence, can bring about a hostility and rage that throws us off our balance into a chaos that we may never return from, at least that is the feeling I have when I am in that chaos. I have been in and out of that chaos often enough to know I do come out of it at some point, often with lacerations and abrasions.

What brings about that anger? For me it is that denial that renunciation of my senses.

So where am I going? Learning to live with myself!

01/30/2017

I awoke to a
Love song from the mountains
As a few tears rolled down my cheek
As the breath moved within me
As the morning's light grew bright

02/02/2017

Through the child's eyes all the chaos we see and fear becomes a beautiful playground.

02/03/2017

When the truth is found to be lies
And all the joy within you dies...
You better find somebody to love
Jefferson Airplane

02/02/2017

My dear friend
This life of modest privilege I live is innate. It is the only life I know.
I am a child of post-world war 2 a boomer a moving force. On I went to upper middle class with my parents that wished for me all the advantages they never had when they were children. By happenstance or fate they made their fortune, and my life comforts, in California real-estate and multiple pensions.

Unpretentious
Patrician aristocrat noble-blood
A life of privilege mostly

02/09/2017

- 1) There are no jobs for "anything." [Before a job interview, know what you want to do.]
- 2) Think before you tweet, post or upload.
- 3) Showing up is half the battle; showing up early and often is the other half.
- 4) Take responsibility when you screw up – you will be rewarded.
- 5) Never give up.
- 6) This will get lost to history
- 7) Have a plan but be flexible.
- 8) Trust your gut.
- 9) Perception is reality.
- 10) Get to know the international students and understand their different perspectives.
- 11) Make good friends. Find a mentor.
- 12) Remember to say thank you, orally and in writing.

- 13) Your mail can always be addressed to "occupant."
- 14) Have a relationship with God.
- 15) It's true — it is who you know.
- 16) Follow your mom's advice: It's not what you say, but how you say it.
- 17) Life is short; leave it on the field.

02/09/2017

My passions exceed the limits of my tolerance. My passionate voice, at times, is destructive to others but for the most to me. If I cannot quiet, disciplined or control that passion it will destroy me. I have my ways and means to rid my chariot, to reign in rhyme and reason but lack the experience to call myself a master charioteer. Like Icarus I sometimes get too near the sun.

02/22/2017 - update 02/23

The Delegitimizing of the Public Sphere.

The Public Sphere: An area in social life where individuals can come together to freely discuss and identify societal problems, and thought that discussion influence political action.

Donald Trump's tweet calling people attending town hall meetings, as "fake" is a direct attempt to delegitimize the public sphere. Donald Trump's tweet calling protesters as "Professional Anarchist" is a direct attempt to delegitimize the public sphere.

With Trump's preference for autocratic Nationalist rulers in Europe and around the world, in order to fight Islamic terror, his efforts to hinder or dismantle NATO, the likelihood of a nuclear war has increased. This could also cause the breakup of the European Union leading to the possibility Russia will gain back it's cold war eastern bloc.

of and a deterioration of the environment making human life impossible, two things we the people have little or no control over

we can affect and protect the 'Public Sphere'.

3/6/2017

"...while Russia continues to dominate the front pages, Trump will continue waging war on immigrants, cutting funding for everything that's not the military, assembling his cabinet of deplorables—with six Democrats voting to confirm Ben Carson for Housing, for example, and ten to confirm Rick Perry for Energy. According to the Trump plan, each of these seems intent on destroying the agency he or she is chosen to run—to carry out what Steve Bannon calls the "deconstruction of the administrative state." As for Sessions, in his first speech as attorney general he promised to cut back civil rights enforcement and he has already abandoned a Justice Department case against a discriminatory Texas voter ID law. But it was his Russia lie that grabbed the big headlines... Imagine if the same kind of attention could be trained and sustained on other issues—like it has been on the Muslim travel ban. It would not get rid of Trump, but it might mitigate the damage he is causing. Trump is doing nothing less than destroying American democratic institutions and principles by turning the presidency into a profit-making machine for his family, by poisoning political culture with hateful, mendacious, and subliterate rhetoric, by undermining the public sphere with attacks on the press and protesters, and by beginning the real work of dismantling every part of the federal government that exists for any purpose other than waging war. Russiagate is helping him..."

Masha Gessen

03/08/2017

Checking In

Dear Chris,

First, I hope you are doing well and having fun at your workplace, if you are not at your workplace please have fun wherever you are.

As for my 'check in' last night; it was not in total unscripted. I had been thinking about it for a few days. What I did not put in the 'check in' is that I am aware that many of those thoughts and feeling are in themselves holding me back, blocking my way, the imaginary gate.

Sunday night I watched an interview between John Oliver and the Dalai Lama. How refreshing it was, open warm caring and kind. Revealing too, both self-deprecating and honest sharing their doubts and fears in the most real humorous and playful way. These last few weeks I am coming to see that nothing need be thrown away, rejected or abandoned. Releasing my grip on things is enough to open the gateless gate.

03/20/2017

Living in an insane world.

Not the "funny ha ha" crazy not the "that is so crazy weird" rather it is more like Kafkaesque Fahrenheit-451 Nineteen Eighty-Four kind of insane.

In this insane world, the landscape has been stripped of its originality, bulldozed over and in its place are sculptures of industry and commerce, separated by designs of foliage and greenery and filled with domesticated genetically modified organisms including humankind. All else that is wild and left behind is slowly becoming extinct and this includes our oceans our aquifer our air and just about everything else of nature's making.

"Man stands comparatively alone as master of mainly lifeless and largely subservient material environment."

Bertrand Russell

03/25/2017

The Theatrical Play as an allegory of my life

The divide between impromptu and scripted is growing wider and deeper within me. I find myself falling into that divide and not knowing what to do or say. In that lost moment or two I scramble for words or actions that will get me back into the play. Still, all that mental disruption leads to a bad and forced moment in my performance. The other players, back stage, may say "that's okay nobody noticed" they may pat me on the back give me a boost up but I know and they know it was an awkward moment that may

have taken the "magic" out of the show. As it is often said and so very true, "the show must go on". The illusion, cracked or not, must continue till the final act and the curtain falls.

The idea that my life is little more than a performance, impromptu and or scripted bad or good, in and of itself is troubling.

04/22/2017

The River of Mind

Sitting at the edge
I float by on the River of Mind
With an entourage of thoughts
Unreliable meaningless thoughts

I, in my vessel, drifting by
Wondering who is on the shore
Looking across the watery way
Through me over to the other side

04/24/2017

"Perception is more important than reality. If someone perceives something to be true, it is more important than if it is in fact true. This doesn't mean you should be duplicitous or deceitful. But don't go out of your way to correct a false assumption if it plays to your advantage."

From 'The Trump Card Playing to Win in Work and Life' by Ivanka Trump

04/26/2017

The Premise:

I acquiesce that there is a 'thing' called addiction as to what that is, is not part of this discussion.

This is about a specific 'thing' that is a social and psychological construct designed for the avoidance of intimacy. This particular construct under discussion uses the object 'narcotics' merely as a trigger a "McGuffin" to move the action forward to its payoff; self-degradation. For convenience, I refer to these kind of constructs as 'games' and label this particular construct 'addict', This premise also tags this game as a 'lifelong' game.

05/06/2017

Personal mission statement

To walk this adventures path with an open mind a discerning eye and a gentle heart.

05/07/2017

Once upon a time there was a great kingdom. As kingdoms rise so too they fall. This is a story of one kingdom's fall. Before the time of the fall the king and queen gave birth to many princes and princesses all beautiful in every way. Many of princes died in battle protecting the kingdom many of the princesses were sent off to marry princes in other kingdoms to secure peace, leaving one favored prince to be the future king and the favored princess to care for king and queen in their old age. The king arraigned their marriages; his son to a lady in waiting and his daughter to the captain of the guard. All in the kingdom was as it should be, all was in a peaceful harmony.

The mother kills the father and feeds his foreskin flesh to the boy child of her desire her secret desire to make him her husband and give birth to the Minotaur and Theseus.

05/08/2017

Driven by a child's dream

Powered on the father's flesh

Sanctified within mother's heart

The being moves through life to death

05/13/2017

Live a carefree life

05/21/2017

"In a society where the normal natural human instances and emotions of sympathy solidarity and mutual support have been driven out of it, is a society that no one would want to live in or raise children in."

Noam Chomsky

05/26/2017

Autonomy is manifested by the recovery of three capacities: Awareness, spontaneity and intimacy... The attainment of autonomy consists of the overthrow of... the weight of a whole tribal or family historical tradition... the influences of parental and cultural backgrounds... the demands of contemporary society at large... and the advantages derived from one's immediate social circles must be partly or wholly sacrificed. All the easy indulgences and rewards of being sullen and a kiss ass must be given up. The individual must attain personal and social control, so that all the classes of behavior, except perhaps dreams, become free choices subject only to one's will.

In essence, the whole preparation consists of obtaining a friendly divorce from one's parents and from other parental influences, so that they may be agreeably visited on occasions, but are no longer dominant.

Awareness, spontaneity and intimacy may be frightening and even perilous to the unprepared. Perhaps most people are better off as they are, seeking their solutions in popular techniques of social action, such as "togetherness"

Eric Berne

5/28/2017

"The great are those who, in the midst of the crowd, keeps with perfect sweetness the independence of solitude"

"Society everywhere is in conspiracy against the manhood of every one of its members. Society is a joint-stock company, in which the members agree, for the better securing of his bread to

each shareholder, to surrender the liberty and culture of the eater. The virtue in most request is conformity. Self-reliance is its aversion. It loves not realities and creators, but names and customs."

Ralph Waldo Emerson 1840

Okay let's just state this again:

Personal mission statement

To walk this adventures path with an open mind a discerning eye and a gentle heart.

5/31/2017

"We should remember that the baby is afraid of the world and is probably yearning for a place to which no one can ever return. He cannot think and has no effective inner way of coping with his fears and desires. While his stomach can be filled from a bottle, his feeling of security and his urge to growth can best be nourished by a mother's embrace... The sole guides of his conduct are his primitive yearning and anxieties... Somewhere is something which is warm and loving and makes him feel secure. It also allays his hunger and strokes his skin so that he falls into a refreshing sleep. His greatest security comes from being close to this warm and loving influence. When he is deserted, or his mother's admitted or hidden lack of love makes him feel deserted, he is unhappy. When he is in the arms of his loving mother or can hear her loving tones, he is happy and feels secure."

Erick Berne 1947

This is an excerpt from the latest book I am reading. It is from the chapter on 'the nursing child'.

Even though I have some understanding of the nursing child and the needs of the child for physical affection and love, these words have brought a clarity, in a poetic way. It may not be just the words but also the growth in self-understanding and in self-acceptance in this last year. My sense of security my urge to grow and change has been nourished in the loving arms of my mother from the beginning. As I grew, I cultivated a fierce Independence and self-reliance, she began to doubt herself and medicate her suffering. Yes, I fallowed her, feared losing her, still wanted her affection and love but I never lost that sense of security and urge to grow. My urges took me to strange and adventurous places my security kept me alive.

I know I was given something special, that not everyone has. I know I spent much of my life with part of me in a dark place. I know that today I bring a light to that darkness.

06/02/2017

"The clever and beautiful need not be proud, since they did nothing to earn their advantages. The slow and homely need not be ashamed, since they did nothing to deserve their fate. The hateful need not be blamed, since they did not make themselves hateful; nor need the loving be praised, for the same reason. But the hateful can be blamed for not restraining their hatred, and the loving can be praised for expressing their love."

Eric Berne

06/11/2017

Injunction: Don't play with your pines = don't enjoy sex

The method: Be a sneak, do as your mother does, run away

Counter injunction: you will be free when I am dead = free but old.

In order to attain a healthy identity, and life plan, the person has to have mastered a crisis of trust, shame, guilt, autonomy, and productivity.

6/26/17

Oh how quickly we grow the image of our self in dreams
The botanical spice and floral we pick to be firmly in the heart
Spreading their seeds throughout the garden
A vision a fragrance the beauty of us

7/2/17

On the phone with you both yesterday I felt awkward and uneasy. After all the pain I caused is it possible to make amends? Much was left out. The sorrow the anguish of everyone involved. I will miss not seeing you all before your go. May you have a peaceful easy-going flight.

Sometimes text or tweet is the best way to say something.

Text form:

On the phone with you both yesterday felt awkward and uneasy. Is it possible to make amends over the phone? Much was left out. I will miss not seeing you all before your go. May you have a peaceful easy-going flight. Love you both

Sincerely Danielle

7/22/2017

House of Cards season 5 v current presidential reality

Voter suppression, cyber hacking, distraction aka 'Wagging the Dog', Machiavellian intrigue, terrorism, have all been part of the political lexicon ever since 9/11 and before. Is it just a coincident that 'House of Cards' resembles the current presidential reality? I would not say it is just coincidences nor would I say it is precognition. I do not think I would even go as far as to say it is a premonition. What I would say is that the narrative of the 'House of Cards' is using the vocabulary of the current political state of mind to create the story. Any resemblance to current presidential reality is inescapable.

8/9/17

"... You kill one of their fairy tale notions and they will bring down the wrath of God Brady and the state legislator every time... it's the loneliest feeling in the world it's like walking down an empty street listening to your own footsteps. But all you have to do is knock on any door and say if you'll let me in I will live the way you want me to live and I will think the way you want me to think and all the blinds will go up and all the doors will doors open and you will never be lonely ever again." Henry Drummond in 'Inherit the Wind'

8/15/17

"Why do we maintain our myths and misconceptions?"

The reasons are numerous. First of all; many of these myths and misconceptions reinforce our preconceived ideological notions...
Other myths and misconceptions reinforce beliefs about ourselves

that are in turn misconceptions... Also, there appears to be a natural tendency to make and misuse historical analogies to support preconceived notions and plans... Relying on historical analogies has constantly led us to tragedy... Faulty perceptions are, in some ways more important than what is actually happening... People act on their bases of perceptions and when perceptions differ so dramatically from reality they can and do lead to tragedy."

Professor Mark A. Stoler

8/23/17

"It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat."
- Theodore Roosevelt

9/20/17

Reflections on last night's gathering.

There are so many powers forces energy pressures gods, whatever we want to call them, greater than us. Many of those powers vie for our attention. Some unknowingly or knowingly have our complete attention like gravity, the air we breathe, the earth we stand on, H₂O, and others. without them we cannot exist. Nature this earth the sky above us has been with us from the beginning, its wonder its mystery also has been with us. What we make of it, for the most, is our own creation. Through our history there have been minds that sought the truth of it all. Many of those minds were destroyed for their effort. We began to see deep into the universe and gained much knowledge, still only a fraction of what is knowable. The unknown is still left to our imagination.

I am a logic based being with a sense of wonder. When I look out I see the beauty of science history poetry philosophy art and the other tools mankind has devised to discover a truth. Some see disorder chaos and evil, others see gods Angeles fairies and unicorns.

I live in a country and government designed by minds of men of distinction knowledge a desire for freedom. Yes, still flawed men but together they created a structure to allow the happiness ideas and strivings of one person not to be suppressed by the will of the mass. This is not a perfect government but it has lasted for over three centuries. From the beginning, this is what I think we have strived for, the freedom to live to believe as we may to search for happiness knowledge independence and security. How long this American experiment will last, I do not know. What I do think is that mankind's striving for freedom happiness knowledge independence security and other human rights will go on as long as we are here. "Praise the Lord"

9/24/17

a creative life 21-day course

- 1) What am I doing this for
to find what a creative life means to me and to see that vision.
- 2) What outcome do I want to achieve
Finding and working the steps to my personal creative life

What am I tired of?

Often this falls into the category of "I do not know". Somedays I have one thing I am tired of like living here in this house and the next day loving living here in this house. Some days I am tired of living with roommate other days I would not want to live without a roommate. Hence, I am conflicted about many things in relationship to what I want to change. I will focus on those things I want to change.

- 1) My sedentary life and indeed I have been changing that greatly.
- 2) Improved concentration.
- 3) Read more often

- 4) end / cleanup my dysfunctional life and relationships.
- 5) exercise my artistic nature much more
- 6) Discover my new way of living.

What and why am I determined to change?

Okay not all of this is defining what I want to change. Let's see what I can come up with

End my distractive destructive none creative part of my life.

End the worry fear distractive lonely isolative caricaturists of my life.

End people pleasing

End the actions caused by Judging people

End my critical mindset that keeps me from trying new things.

End the need to have in a dysfunctional way.

End my need to follow my obsessions and compulsions.

The vision will pull me.

Journal:

List some goals outside of my comfort zone to accomplish
Have some work in a glary. Be on a 2 week and one-month road trip. Travel overseas. Find an agent.

Journal about why living an artistic life matters to me to family and friends.

My heart is an artistic heart my passion is an artistic passion.
It has been lost to me for a long time and now I want it back. I
do not care much what matters for family and friends at this
stage of my life.

9/26/17

"you can't 'do' the Sistine Chapel in one hour"
Leonard Bernstein

This quote is poignant to me in this way: The concept of going
somewhere some place and spending a day a week or month there
just looking and listening. Taking shots now and then. Standing
with a subject or object for a long time. Snapping a moment when
the urge comes.

9/29/17

The Greeks called it Divine Madness Solders heart in the Civil
War shell shock in world war one combat fatigue in the second
world war after Viet Nam it was given a different name post-
traumatic stress disorder PTSD.

10/3/2017

Some knowledge is not meant for children.

There is no Santa Claus

There are no Gods

There is no one God

We live in fantasy land, what is real is very hard to see. Real
is hidden behind constructions of our own doing both social and
personal, used to mostly hide the troublesome inconvenient truth
(whatever that might be for the moment).

Take my dear friend and mentor Chris; he is going through a turmoil a personal hurricane and that hurricane's force is doubling and tripling due to a reality show that wants to take 'his story' live and in living color for all the world to see.

A side note here:

At what expense is this so called 'reality show' spending in order to do the 'show'. Certainly, there is some money involved and some time spent by the well-paid employees. But I propose the biggest expense is coming from the smoothly exploited objectified people that perform for the show. Emotions and feelings exploited by maybe some well-intentioned individuals but mostly by the executive concept of "The Show Must Go On!"

My script for 'group support'

Some knowledge is not meant for children.

Please all the children here leave the room now.

(give them a movement to leave).

There is no Santa Claus

There are no Gods no devils no angels or supernatural beings

We live in fantasy land, what is real is very hard to see. Real is hidden behind constructions of our own doing both social and personal, used to mostly hide the troublesome inconvenient truth, whatever that might be for the moment.

One the subject of my dear friend and mentor Chris; he is going through a turmoil a personal hurricane and that hurricane's force is doubling and tripling due to a reality show that wants to take 'his story' live and in living color for all the world to see. At what expense is this so called 'reality show' spending in order to do the 'show'. Certainly, there is some money involved and some time spent by the well-paid employees. But I propose the biggest expense is coming from the smoothly exploited objectified people that perform for the show. Emotions and feelings exploited by maybe some well-intentioned individuals but mostly by the executive concept of "The Show Must Go On!" So, the show goes on, at any expense, knowingly or unknowingly, to the emotional wellbeing of the performers and their family. All this to put on a P.T. Barnum "There's a sucker born every minute" style show.

10/5/17

List of all my possible creative projects:

My books:

- A child of the sixties
- The Great American Story
- Addiction for Beginners

Photography:

- New York photo trip
- The two week or month on location shoot
- Washington DC photo trip
- Back to Florida photo trip

Not so creative projects:

- Photoshop classes online
- Grunge
- Black and White

Adobe tutorials

When I think of projects creative projects or just things to do a question of life how to live life for me. Living life for me without the strings and pulls of 'what I am supposed to do' 'what I should do' 'what others want me to do' 'my imaginary beliefs of what to do' on and on my head spins. All this is a kind of delusional thinking.

For me a kind of ideal.

Fallow my morning routine and at the end of that plan a pleasurable enjoyable day. Work and play. And, and my end is near enough to start letting go. All around me is ephemeral including myself.

Legacy Legacy Legacy Legacy.

My biggest projects are my legacy Projects.

'A child of the sixties'

Photographic prints

My journal

Paper. Me On paper. That is my legacy

An archive of me on paper to outlive my flesh. Spiral bound or in portfolio or binder or box or architectural document draws.

Not to sell them not to promote them or haggle a deal. Not to compromise. Not to spend time marketing myself on a stage of onlookers.

Creativity driven to have something survive beyond my flesh and beyond the memory of my offspring. Something to be found. Some peaceful some challenging, thought provoking, alive for others to possibly appreciate or not.

All the rest of my time I want to spend on learning, and enjoying life.

10/8/17

Being me between projects.

If projects are a way to avoid me then those projects are dysfunctional behavior.

If the projects are a means to be me then they are functional behavior.

So in a functional way between projects me is calm happy and fulfilled.

10/9/17 Historian Paul Gaston 'The new south creed'
America in the 1970s after the final legal end of white-supremacy. Certain white southerners started displaying confederate symbols and southern states retrofitted state flags to include them. White people in the north and west would feel like southerners, anxious sore-losers more conscious of their race. It was the nationalization of the race-problem. The black power movement black riots skyrocketing rates of suburban crime all making white Americans all over feel besieged, their comfortable ways of life threatened. Their whiteness no longer an all access VIP pass. It was an infiltration experience of the elements of pathos frustration and imperfection that had long caricaturized the south. The white southern habit became a national white habit.

10/9/17

Working on my 'Integrity of Vision'

Things I would like to be, the vision of being:

As an artist;

be creative with purpose
enjoy it
have fun with it
don't let it dominate my life
take it easy
drive it not let it drive me
avocation not a career
thoughtful
spontaneous
playful
intuitive
sometimes effortless
always learning
beginners mind skillful action

accidentally famous before or after I die
naturel
instinctive
pleasing to me and others
challenging to me and others
part of who I am
AS a person;
Friendly
Thoughtful
Aware
Present
Natural
Spontaneous
Intuitive
Intimate at times
Charming
Challenging
Kind

10/10/17

I remember the national 'witch hunt' of the 1980's to the 1990's. The news about satanic cults abducting children in the tens of thousands. Geraldo Rivera investigations, 20 20 news on satanic day care centers, children's dubious testimony trials and many convictions lasting years only to be reversed a few decades later by the testimony of the grown children who felt chord by investigators to tell falsehoods. I remember, at that time, how fantastical and ridiculous all this was, claims of forty thousand deaths due to satanic activity when statistics, in that time frame, were only a total of twenty thousand deaths in total. How the nation was looking in every day care every privet preschool looking for any hint of Satanism. Today the Salem witch hunt, a localized event lasting less than a year, is still remembered, still a reminder of the loss of reason and its consequences. But our national witch hunt of the 1980's, lasting over a decade, is long forgotten.

10/12/17

E. O. Wilson "I am not an atheist I am a scientist. Atheism is the belief that there is no god... I would even say I am agnostic because I am a scientist."

I am not an atheist I am agnostic. It is difficult for me to explain this so I will use a quote from my favorite mind.

Albert Einstein "In my opinion the idea of a personal god is a childlike one but I do not share the crusading spirit of the professional atheist. I prefer and audited of humility, corresponding to the weakness or our intellectual understanding of nature and of our own being. Indeed, the most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious. He to whom this emotion is a stranger who can no longer pause to wonder and stand wrapped in awe is as good as dead, his eyes are closed. To know that what is impenetrable to us really exists, manifesting itself as the highest wisdom and the most radiant beauty our dull faculties can comprehend only in their most primitive forms,

this knowledge this feeling is at the center of true religiousness. In this sense and this sense only, I belong in the ranks of the devoutly religious Men."

My life is not pristine, I fall into fits of emotions, superstition, irrational beliefs, flights of fantasy. And arrogance aloofness self-riotousness too. Still, I do work hard not to succumb to magical thinking.

I am agnostic about god. always ready but never expecting to be persuaded. This too may be magical thinking.

11/09/2017

Thirtieth birthday letter to Matthew

Dear Matt

Happy 30 years birthday. You made it! It has been said that the human brain does not fully mature till thirty. This may or may not be true. What I do know is that you have gone through enough that makes a person mature. Don't worry, you still have much more to go through. Not sure why thirty is a kind of 'milestone' in life but historically it seems to be. Then there is the tradition of parents giving advice to their thirty-year-old children. Probably just an excuse. By now you probably have some idea of why parents want to give advice to their children.

That said, here is your father's "Thirty-year birthday advice". First and foremost; when it comes to advice take what you want and leave the rest behind.

Be aware, aware of all around you and aware of all within you, as best you can. This is best done with a daily practice of

prayer (if you are into that) and meditation. There are many examples to pick from on youtube. Find some that you like and use them.

Read the writings of the world's great thinkers past and present. Their words will bring you comfort and ideas to ponder on.

Be kind to strangers and kinder to friends and loved ones. Be kind to fools for they know not what they do, but do not suffer them. Tell them to fuck off in a gentle way. Be kind to yourself.

Embrace your anger and rage hold it gently then let it go as fast as it came. Act on it only after a good amount of contemplation.

Understand that the sliver in your finger, the pebble in your shoe and the thorn in your side are letting you know you are alive.

This advice may clear some of the bumps from the path of your life possibly finding comfort possibly finding rhyme and reason to all of it.

It is my greatest joy to see you grow. I know your mother would say the same.

Your loving father

11/24/17

I seek for my bride and turn away as she rejects my garment.
Her eyes look upon me with indignation and aversion.
Her eyes demanding to change the cloak that surrounds me.
I walk away from my bride to my freedom in shame.
Like a child forlorn by its mother's cord.
I turn and walk away alone
With only myself to comfort me.
And the vague vision of my place.

11/28/17

The seven liberal arts in two parts:

The trivium: Grammar, rhetoric, logic

The Quadrivium: Geometry, arithmetic, music, astronomy

12/12/2017

Getting ready for the new year!!!